PLEASE BE AWARE THAT
THIS PLAY IS FULLY PROTECTED BY COPYRIGHT

All plays, books, music and other materials published by Heartland Plays, Inc. are fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries which the United States has reciprocal relations including, but not limited to all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, The Universal Copyright Convention and the Berne Convention. All rights to the plays and materials on our website are strictly reserved including, and without limitation, professional and amateur performance rights; motion pictures; public reading; radio and television broadcasting; audio and video recording and reproduction of any type known or yet to be invented; information storage and retrieval systems of any type known or yet to be invented; and the rights of translation into any and all languages. No individual or organization whether amateur or stock may perform this or any play published by Heartland Plays, Inc. without first obtaining advance permission from Heartland Plays, Inc. and paying the appropriate fees including Royalties and Single-Use Copyright fees. Heartland Plays, Inc. collects royalties on behalf of the Playwrights whose plays it publishes. Unauthorized copying, transcribing or reproduction of this or any play or excerpt, or storage or transmittal in any form and by any means whether known or yet to be invented, is strictly forbidden except as provided by Agreement with Heartland Plays, Inc. Any unauthorized use is a violation of copyright laws and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

FIVE SIMPLE RULES TO REMEMBER

1. DO take advantage of the free online perusal of our plays to help you make the best choice for your particular needs or production.

2. DO enjoy the convenience of our online purchase application for performance rights and single-use copyright.

3. DO understand that this play and all plays and materials on our website are controlled by Heartland Plays, Inc. and fully protected by copyright.

4. DO NOT attempt in any way to copy, transcribe or reproduce this play by any means or perform this play or use any play or material from our website without first receiving permission from Heartland Plays, Inc. Any attempt to use this or any other work without first obtaining permission is a violation of copyright and punishable by law.

5. DO NOT rob this Author or any of the Authors we represent of their right to be paid for the use of their property. It is a crime and it is wrong!
WILL THEY KNOW WHO WE ARE?

New York Plays

by

Maria Brandt

For Emily and William, for everything.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
REPRODUCTION WITHOUT SPECIFIC WRITTEN PERMISSION PROHIBITED

Performance Rights Available Exclusively through
Heartland Plays, Inc. at heartlandplays.com
playsnow@heartlandplays.com
customer service: 406-431-7680

Copyright © 2014 by Maria Brandt
Will They Know Who We Are?
by Maria Brandt

A collection of 27 short works intended to be performed with an ensemble cast. All of the works are also available individually as short plays.

CHARACTERS:

*Will They Know Who We Are?*
- Citizen, anyone

*The Door*
- Maeve, woman, Evelyn’s sister, late 30s
- Evelyn, woman, Maeve’s sister, late 20s

*Speaking Through a Screen*
- Rose, woman, of Polish descent, 80s
- Sam, man, landscaper, 20s

*Ninety Degrees*
- Nancy, woman, part-Seneca, teenager
- George, man, part-Seneca, Nancy’s grandfather, 70s

*Page Twenty-Seven*
- Hank, man, Roger’s brother, 30s
- Roger, man, 30s or 40s, Hank’s brother

*Goodbye*
- Lucy, woman, Anita’s sister, early 30s
- Anita, woman, Lucy’s sister, late 30s
- Dead Anita, like Anita, but grotesque
- Tobias, man, Lucy’s husband, early 30s

*Part of Your Body*
- Ava, woman, politician, 40s
- Jonathan, man, Ava’s clerk, 30s

*Little Hands*
- Rachel, woman, Jennifer and Jane’s friend, 30s
- Jennifer, woman, Rachel and Jane’s friend, 30s
- Jane, woman, Rachel and Jennifer’s friend, 30s

*War/Bathtub*
- Amina, woman, 8-years-old
- Simone, woman, Amina’s mother, 20s

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE
As Little Conscious Thought as Possible
- Jerome, man, Maggie’s ex-husband, 30s or 40s
- Maggie, woman, Jerome’s ex-wife, 30s or 40s

Kink
- Katie, woman, Jim’s girlfriend, late teens
- Jim, man, Katie’s boyfriend, late teens

Voyeurism
- Jackson, man, white, 30s
- John, man, white, 30s
- Hugh, man, black, teenager

Steal
- Peter, man, union-worker, 30s
- Marcus, man, union-worker, 30s
- Earnest, man, union-worker, 30s

Rip Van Winkle
- Rip Van Winkle, man, 20s, a very old man
- Dame Van Winkle, woman, Rip Van Winkle’s wife, 20s
- Rip Junior, man, Rip Van Winkle’s son, 20s
- Nicholas Vedder, man, owner of the local pub
- The Ghosts of Henry Hudson’s Crew, anyone

It Gets You
- Chorus, corporate leaders “disguised” as farmers, anyone
- Martha, woman, farmer, 40s
- Jennifer, woman, corporate-worker, 20s

Putting Off
- Hannah, woman, John’s wife, 70s
- John, man, Hannah’s husband, 70s

Sexy Decoy
- Patrick, man, Irish immigrant, 20s
- Maranne, woman, Irish immigrant, 20s

The Next Thing
- Josephine, woman, of Italian descent, 50s
- Anthony, man, of Italian descent, 50s

Two Bodies in a Field
- Jim, man, Ann’s husband, late 40s
- Ann, woman, Jim’s wife, late 40s

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE
They Were Real
- Maria, woman, Mexican migrant worker, 20s
- Sal, man, Mexican migrant worker, 20s

Cold War
- Daniel, man, West Point student, 20s
- Spike, man, West Point student, 20s
- Roger, man, West Point student, 20s

Home
- Lucy, woman, Jack’s sister, 13-years-old
- Jack, man, Lucy’s brother, 17-years-old
- David, man, Jack’s friend, 17-years-old

Relativity
- Chastity, woman, black, 18-years-old
- Brad, man, white, 19-years-old

Litter
- Josh, man, Sylvia’s husband, 40s
- Sylvia, woman, Josh’s wife, 30s
- Jasmine, woman, Tom’s wife, 40s
- Tom, man, Jasmine’s husband, 40s

Backwards
- Darcy, woman, 30s, almost like a cartoon character
- Olivia, woman, 40s

Gay Marriage
- Michael, man, teenager
- Steve, man, teenager
- Barb, woman, Stella’s wife
- Stella, woman, Barb’s wife

Play Without a Prompt
- Loudspeaker, a voice
- Person, a traveler, anyone
- Busker, anyone
- Passengers, a various group

PRODUCTION NOTES
Will They Know Who We Are? works best with a simple stage that makes transitioning as seamless as possible. This might mean having two or three separate playing spaces that share pieces; it might mean having one large playing space with multiple abstract pieces; it might mean something else. The key is privileging suggestion over realism.

PROPERTY LIST AT END OF PLAY
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

New York Plays was originally produced by Out of Pocket Productions at MuCCC in Rochester, NY, in October 2014, with the following artists:

Director: Stephanie Roosa
Stage Manager: Elissa Burke
Designers: Stephanie Roosa and Josh Burke

Ensemble Cast: Denise Bartalo, Don Bartalo, Abby DeVuyst, David Jason Kyle, Barbara Lobb, Adam Petzold, Allison Roberts, Stephanie Roosa, Stephanie Sheak, Kate Sherman, Kevin Sean Sweeney

This production featured seventeen of the plays with one intermission. The remaining ten plays were performed as readings during the production’s run. For text that was added between plays for this production to maintain consistency, please see addendum at end of play.

PLAY DEVELOPMENT

Litter
The Women’s Theatre Project, Girl Play Festival, Fort Lauderdale, Reading

The Next Thing
Geva Theatre Center and Writers and Books, 2 Pages/2 Voices Competition, Rochester, Reading
C4: Chamber Four Literary Magazine, Online Publication

Relativity
Subversive Theatre Company, Subversive Shorts Festival, Buffalo, Finalist
Over Here Theatre Company, ObamAmerica Festival, London, Finalist

Speaking Through a Screen
InDigest Literary Magazine, Online Publication

They Were Real
Geva Theatre Center and Writers and Books, 2 Pages/2 Voices Competition, Rochester, Reading
PREFACE

I grew up in East Patchogue and East Islip, two small towns on the south shore of Long Island. My father grew up on a turkey farm in Speonk, and my mother grew up in an Italian neighborhood in Brooklyn. My childhood was saturated with the smell of salt water, the allure of the Long Island Railroad, and the influence of Manhattan. This was New York—or so I thought. Twelve years ago, I moved with my husband at the time to Rochester, New York, and realized how wrong I was. In fact, I still remember the first time a fellow Rochestarian told me she was “going to New York” for the weekend, as if that New York were somehow different from this New York, as if the New York of my childhood were somehow different from the New York I’m still discovering as an adult.

As such, I’m well aware the plays in this collection are by no means representative of New York State. Instead, they embody my changing fascination with the diverse geography and people I’ve encountered through an array of subjective experiences. I’ve dug for clams in the Great South Bay; I’ve missed trains at Penn Station; I’ve hiked forest trails in the Mohonk Preserve; I’ve climbed mountains in the Adirondacks; I’ve picked and eaten New York apples; I’ve swam in the Finger Lakes and in the Atlantic Ocean; I’ve taken multiple, lingering day trips to Buffalo, Syracuse, and Ithaca with my then-husband and son; I’ve camped along Lake Ontario; I’ve discovered favorite restaurants in the Thousand Islands and the Southern Tier; I’ve attended funerals and weddings, made and lost friends, worked at a department store and print shop, launched a career, had a baby, and driven countless hours and miles here. New York—all of it—is my home.

And these are my plays about that home. I’ve chosen to write plays in part because of the rich history this state holds in relation to the dramatic arts, and in part because of my own history with theatre. More than anything, though, I wanted to explore the potential of multiple dramatic forms to body forth the New York of my imagination, as Shakespeare might have said. No literary form confronts the body quite like plays. Whether you read these plays or perform them, I invite you to consider that curious confrontation, that transformative space where imagination and embodiment collide.

*

I would like to thank Monroe Community College for granting me a professional leave during the Fall 2013 semester, enabling me to wrangle with the final round of revisions in earnest. I’d also like to thank Stephanie Roosa and Out of Pocket Productions for believing enough in this project to put it on its feet. I’d like to thank my fellow Straw Mat Writers, three beautiful women who helped me find the beating heart of each of these short plays; Emily Brandt for catalyzing Project MAE, which birthed this collection; and the whole Brandt clan for supporting me through this collection and so much more. Most of all, I’d like to thank my son, William, who inspires me and keeps me grounded, at the same time.
Will They Know Who We Are?
by Maria Brandt

WILL THEY KNOW WHO WE ARE?

CHARACTERS:

U.S. CITIZEN; anyone.

AT RISE:

Different-sized steel boxes are scattered around the stage. Through the course of the play, CITIZEN arranges the boxes into buildings that form something like the grid of Manhattan, preferably the far-east side of the grid, near 34th or 42nd Street.

CITIZEN

How to build a city? Where to start? North to south? To honor the sun? (CITIZEN looks for the sun.) Where is the sun? (CITIZEN shields his/her eyes.) Yes, the sun! (CITIZEN works.) Let us build a city from north to south to honor the sun! (CITIZEN pauses.) To honor? (CITIZEN works.) No, to capture the sun, let us build a city to capture the sun. (CITIZEN pauses.) Should our city capture the sun? Who should be in control, our city or the sun? (CITIZEN works.) We will worship the sun and we will capture the sun. The sun will pour its rays down the grid of our city and we will mark the days and nights, the equal days and the equal nights, the equinoxes! Because we will honor equality, we will capture equality, honoring, capturing, yes! (CITIZEN stops working.) No. (CITIZEN rests and wipes his/her brow.) We will not honor equality, nix on north to south. (CITIZEN starts to rotate the grid.) Let us turn ourselves, let us rotate our city to the east and let us honor our city, let us spin! (CITIZEN works.) Our city of steel, our city of nights, our city of electric words and invisible money and sidewalks that float their cracks up your ass. (CITIZEN stops.) No. (CITIZEN works.) Yes. That float their cracks up your ass. Rotated towards the east from the geographic north, two days a year, the sun. (CITIZEN dances.) Two days a year, the sun! (CITIZEN stands still. Then, CITIZEN works.) Two days a year the sun will stop on the grid of our city, its bones, the racks upon which it hangs its flesh. Two days a year, the sun will rise and our buildings will push its light into canyons edged from east to west, like Stonehenge, captured, the light will— (CITIZEN makes some extreme and inspired gesture and sound.) Ignite! It will ignite our city, and we will think to ourselves, that is the sun, we will worship its fire, we will worship the city that has captured its fire, that city is great, great we are! (CITIZEN works.) Two days a year, two days, which days to honor the sun? Which days to capture the sun? Not the equinoxes, let us not mark equality, let us not honor equality, but what? Which days? How to choose the days? Not the solstices, others have honored the solstices, we need our own days to honor, our own days to honor, the last stop buster, the last stop before we dig up our own bones. (CITIZEN stops, wipes his/her brow, then works.) Rotate to the east, almost there, the last stop, the train lets out. (CITIZEN makes the sound of a train.) The train lets out, we walk the streets, we stare in wonder at the captured sun. Which days? How to measure our own bones? (CITIZEN stops and laughs.) Yes! (CITIZEN covers his/her eyes
and spins until he/she falls. Then, while on the ground, CITIZEN removes a tape measure. Of course, this is it, this is how we decide who we are, this is always how we decide who we are! (CITIZEN painstakingly measures the distance from where he/she fell to where the boxes currently rest.) Twenty-nine degrees. (CITIZEN works.) There we have it, twenty-nine degrees to the east, twenty-nine degrees to the east of the geographic north, ooli-ooli-ooli! (CITIZEN dances while working.) We’ve measured and we’ve marked, the people will get off their trains, they’ll stop and stare, they’ll say, “Ooli-ooli-ooli,” because we’ve decided where to start, because we know who we are! (CITIZEN works.) And the scientists will come, this is important, they’ll come in the future and they’ll notice that two days a year our city captures the sun in the bones of its grid, so they’ll measure that grid, and they’ll make their charts, and they’ll figure it out! They’ll use their research to determine the first, and then they’ll study— (CITIZEN laughs and dances.) And they’ll determine the second, and they’ll follow our clues and they’ll figure it out, they’ll—! (CITIZEN pauses.) But will they? Or will they scratch their heads? Will they figure out the days, but still scratch their heads? (CITIZEN rests, scratches his/her head.) “What could it all mean?” they’ll say, “What could it all mean?” (CITIZEN pauses. Silence. Then, CITIZEN works.) They won’t know what it means, the motivation, the raison d’etre, the zeitgeist, they’ll look at their graphs and their electronic texts, they’ll figure out the days, but they won’t know what it means. They’ll zip to their distant stars to conduct personal interviews, they’ll finger the model trains they’ve crafted with popsicle sticks, they’ll expostulate and hypothesize and write their treatises, “we have determined the days, but what could it all mean?” (CITIZEN stands still.) What could it all…? (CITIZEN points to the sky, a burst of inspiration.) But the young ones, with their fancy hats, the young ones will stand on blocks of steel! (CITIZEN stands on a block of steel.) “I have solved the riddle,” they will say! “Listen to me while I list my sources!” (CITIZEN climbs down.) They’ll figure us out, the young ones will… (CITIZEN stands still.) But will they? (Exhausted, CITIZEN sits.) Maybe a small child with rings on her fingers will find in a dirty archived box some crumpled sheet music and they’ll sing the songs, but will they know who we are? Maybe they’ll take off their hats and bake apple pies and pull the levers in old voting booths, but will they—? (Lights begin to dim.) They’ll scratch their heads and… (CITIZEN starts finishing the city. This is very slow.) So tall, so filled with life and steel and bones, they’ll discover our songs, “Start spreading the news, I’m leaving today,” they’ll study and they’ll…. (Exhausted, CITIZEN drops to his/her knees.) They will never know who we are…. 

CITIZEN lifts his/her head and watches in silent awe as some fantastic lighting effect simulates Manhattanhenge.

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK.
THE DOOR

CHARACTERS: MAEVE, female; late 30s.
EVELYN, Maeve’s sister, late 20s.

AT RISE: MAEVE and EVELYN are packing boxes in a basement on the south shore of Long Island. Lots of tools and a wall.

MAEVE
I went to the beach at the end of the road, just before you got here.

EVEYLYN
Yeah?

MAEVE
It’s small, much smaller than it used to be.

EVEYLYN
I don’t think so. (Beat. A look from MAEVE.) What?

How would you know?

EVEYLYN
What’s that supposed to mean?

MAEVE
You were too little, dad and I mostly went without you. (EVELYN freezes, the blow hit, then packs.) I’d pick up dead horseshoe crabs and pretend they were swords, they’d have all this dried-out seaweed sticking to their shells, I didn’t care, and we’d wade through foam from the bay, digging our toes into the mud, looking for clams so mom could make a pot of chowder. (Beat.) I used to think we could walk around the entire island just by following that shoreline. (Beat.) We never got past the first bend. (Beat.) It’s so small now. (Short, awkward pause.)

EVEYLYN
I need to catch the 2:32 train.

MAEVE
Oh.

EVEYLYN
And I do remember the beach, it was always small, and it smelled like rotten eggs.
Now it does. It didn’t then.

**MAEVE**

**THEY pack.**

**EVELYN**

Maeve— (Beat.)

**MAEVE**

What?

**EVELYN**

Nothing, I’m glad I came, Dad spent a lot of time down here, before— (Beat.)

**MAEVE**

I know.

**EVELYN**

He’d build things, remember?

**MAEVE**

“Things.” (They both smile.) We never knew what, maybe he never built anything.

**EVELYN**

He built me a bookshelf. (Beat.)

**MAEVE**

That’s right. (She picks up a tool.) He built you a bookshelf, and now you’re catching the 2:32 train.

*For a moment, they hate each other.*

**EVELYN**

What do you want from me?

**MAEVE**

I’m sorry—

**EVELYN**

Jesus, Maeve—

**MAEVE**

I said I’m sorry. (Beat.) It’s just that you have this whole life and I’m still— (Beat. She sets the tool on top of a box.) I should wrap this.
EVELYN

It’s okay.

MAEVE

It’s not okay, you have everything and I’m stuck. (Short, awkward pause.) Last night, at the restaurant, someone took a crate of blue-claws out of the freezer and forgot to put them back. The crabs unfroze and climbed out of the crate, all over the floor, looking for, I’d pick one up with tongs and three more would escape, all over the concrete floor, I was sweating like crazy. (Beat.) A swarm of fucking blue-claws, clack clack clack, like in a nightmare—

Silence. She wraps the tool in newspaper.

EVELYN

You’re not stuck. (MAEVE shoots her a look.) He loved that place—

MAEVE

Exactly.

EVELYN

But you’re not stuck, you can leave any time you want—

MAEVE

He built that place from nothing, a warehouse with a freezer, then a big piece of polished driftwood—

EVELYN

I know but—

MAEVE

What am I supposed to do? We’d sit around that driftwood, sometimes the guys would come in after hauling clams, we’d talk about taxes and the beach closing, do you remember any of this?

EVELYN

Maeve—

MAEVE

Then he hired John to make chowder and we’d sell flounder, mussels, bay scallops, we opened some docking slips, set up tables, I can’t— (She stops and watches EVELYN pack.) Besides, how would I make a living? I never went to college, all I know how to do is shuck clams and bushel crabs. (Beat.) And I hate crabs, I’ve always hated crabs, I remember he would stuff a bag of crabs in a big pot of boiling water in the kitchen, just upstairs, and they would click their claws against the lid, this great, sorry attempt at freedom, I hated them. Even those horseshoe crabs, dripping with dried-out seaweed, I dropped one once and bugs swarmed out of the cracks, bugs. And I hated that beach, we tried to walk around the island, like we could find a way, but we never got past the first bend. (Beat.) And he built you a
MAEVE, Continued

bookshelf and now you have a place for your books. (Beat.) You’re catching a 2:32 train and you know where you’re going.

EVELYN goes to touch MAEVE, then stops.

EVELYN
Maeve, I need to— (Pause.)

MAEVE
When we were little, before you were born, Mom would say, “Dad’s downstairs, he’s building something,” I convinced myself he was building something secret, like a door. I started dreaming about that door, details like its shape or its location and what might be on the other side, sometimes it was a room, sometimes a— (Beat.) And I told him my dreams, I remember, him and mom, he was driving and I was in the backseat, we were on Sunrise Highway, and I came down here afterwards, by myself, and rubbed my hands all over the wall trying to find that door. (Beat.) I thought he was building that door for me, so I could find, so I could escape.

MAEVE rubs her hands over the wall.
EVELYN watches.

This is Not the End of “The Door”
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes
SPEAKING THROUGH A SCREEN

CHARACTERS: 
ROSE, 80s; a woman, of Polish descent. 
SAM, 20s; a landscaper.

AT RISE: 
ROSE sits on a reclining chair on a screen-enclosed porch near the St. Lawrence River in the late 1970s. She is covered in blankets. When she speaks, she yells, as if she were hard of hearing. 
SAM is working outside. A pile of gigantic stones sits in the corner of the porch. The effect can be absurd.

ROSE
It was 1904. Come here. Press your face against the screen so I can see you. (SAM revs a power tool. ROSE talks louder.) You and your noise, you don’t want to hear, no one wants to hear, no one cares that it was 1904, that he worked on the Castle. That he carried stones from boats on the river and placed those stones in piles for the pulleys, then climbed his ladder and lifted the stones, that he built the Castle. (SAM turns off the power tool. ROSE still yells.) Not the Power House, not the Tower, not even the Gazebo. (She realizes the power tool has been shut off. She’s a little quieter.) The Castle. Come closer. Press your face against the screen. (SAM comes closer but does not press his face against the screen.) You’re a shadow, a haunt.

SAM
Ma’am?

Silence. SAM turns and revs the power tool. ROSE yells above the noise.

ROSE
He used tools to chisel those stones into shape, nothing you plug into the wall, he used his hands and made something real. (She knocks on the window sill. He doesn’t hear her.) I’ve never been to the Castle, but I know where it is, on one of those small islands in the middle of the river. (She knocks again, but he doesn’t hear her, so she leans as close to the window as she can without falling out of her chair.) He crafted stones while we lived in a stuffed one-room apartment in Manhattan with the other Polacks. They played their accordions and we could hear them dancing, their feet pounding on the wood floors, and we could smell their studzienina and golabki, and we waited for him to come back so he could dance too. He crafted stones and sent us the money, and I went to correspondence school. (She covers her ears.) And then the letter came. “Dear Mrs. Wachnick.” The letter the letter the letter. (Silence. Then, she removes her hands from her ears and yells more loudly.) And then the lady of the Castle died, she died, and bells rang across the river. He had been dead already, dead like a rat, not like a rat, like a mouse that got stuck in a maze scuttling for cheese that isn’t there, a shadow, he had been dead and the maze kept going, and the other mice crawled through, their tails cut off, but when she died, when the lady of the Castle died, someone took
ROSE, Continued
the maze away, poof, like a magic trick, and all the work stopped, and the rains kept coming, and the stones fell to ruin. I watched my mother stumble into her bed and never get out again, I dropped my correspondence course so I could feed my mother chicken soup with a spoon, I let that one-room apartment stuff me inside its walls. But I took what I learned in my correspondence course and wrote a letter, and they wrote me back, and I read a book and knew the work had stopped, I knew the Castle tumbled to the ground! (She makes a loud noise, maybe bangs the table or stomps her foot. SAM turns off the power tool.) I’ve paid young men for fifty years, since 1927, to row to the island and steal me a stone. Will you row to the island? Will you steal me a stone? I’ll pay you. I’ll give you a dollar.

SAM
Ma’am?

ROSE
When my mother died I moved to this village by the river and sat on this porch and the wind has chilled my bones, the wind that blows from Ontario east, pushing cargo boats with their loads of furniture and specialty goods, but I’ve collected fifty stones. I’ve worked my body stacking fifty stones into a pile in the corner of this room. (She points to the pile.) One prayer for each stone that I’ve stolen like a thief!

SAM
Ma’am?

ROSE
(She prays.) “I remember you, my father, who used to know the notes of the songs. I pray on the first stone for the songs to sound again. I pray on the second stone for the flavor of pickled pigs’ feet and cabbage stuffed with beef. I pray for correspondence and I pray for Manhattan and I pray for mothers who have died and for chicken soup and for ladders. I pray for dry ladders and for men who climb those ladders and lift their stones and who never slip on the highest rung, who never fall through the winter cold, who never lie in a heap of bones in the tall grass that moves by the river….”

SAM
You mean the Castle?

ROSE
Yes. The Castle. They tell the story of the lady of the Castle. I used what I learned in my correspondence course and wrote a letter and learned nothing about my father, only about the lady of the Castle.

SAM
Right here?
ROSE
Yes. Right here. They tell the story of the lady of the Castle but no one tells the story of my father, of the man who fell from his ladder in the rain and whose bones were crushed on a pile of stones!

SAM
The Castle on the island in the river?

ROSE
Yes! In the river! (She’s breathing heavily.) Will you row your boat, young man? Will you steal me a stone? I’ll give you a dollar.

SAM
They’re working on the Castle again Ma’am.

ROSE
What?

SAM
(He’s excited.) They’re rebuilding it, they want to finish it this time, they have tools, power tools, they’re rebuilding the Castle! Boldt Castle! To honor the lady! It’ll be famous!

ROSE
(Her voice gets louder again.) To honor the lady?

SAM
They want people to hear the story and visit us.

ROSE
They’ll never do it!

SAM
It’s for the tourists, ma’am, so we can have more tourists, so we can have a life. (ROSE struggles to rise from her chair, her blankets falling in heaps around her. SAM approaches the window. He presses his face into the screen, creating hideous shadows.) They want us to have a life.

This is Not the End of “Speaking through a Screen”
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes
NINETY DEGREES

CHARACTERS: NANCY; Teenager, part-Seneca.
               GEORGE; Nancy’s grandfather, 70s, Seneca.

AT RISE: Almost 9 p.m., early September, on a hill above Canandaigua Lake. GEORGE leans against his walking stick and reads a signpost. NANCY sits on her backpack. Over the course of the play, the lights grow darker as the sun goes fully down.

NANCY
(She pulls out two apples and a water bottle.) You hungry?

GEORGE
Sure. (He struggles to sit next to NANCY over these next lines. She shares with him.) Must be ninety degrees.

NANCY
Indian Summer. (Beat.) Sorry. (Beat.) She talking to you yet?

GEORGE
Nah, I’ll give her a few days. (They eat.)

NANCY
They’ve been doing this forever, it’s a Seneca tradition.

GEORGE
(He gestures to the signpost, sarcastic.) So they say.

NANCY
You’ll see, the lights—

GEORGE
They’ll appear one at a time until they wrap around the lake, I know.

NANCY
We used to come here when I was a kid, spread out a picnic, it felt like magic, like something old, like I was connected. (Beat.)

GEORGE
You didn’t think you were connected?
You know what I mean.

NANCY

Nancy….

GEORGE

What did you expect? (Beat.)

NANCY

I could tell you a story.

GEORGE

I don’t think so. (Pause.)

NANCY

Okay, we can sit quietly. (Pause. GEORGE looks sideways at NANCY.) It’s about a snake.

GEORGE

You’re not sitting quietly.

NANCY

The Great Snake.

GEORGE

I know about the Great Snake.

NANCY

How do you—

GEORGE

I’m not stupid. (Beat.)

NANCY

Did your mother—

GEORGE

No. (Beat.)

NANCY

Then how? (NANCY stands and looks at the signpost.) I see. (Beat.) I’ll tell you what that signpost leaves out.

GEORGE

Suit yourself.

NANCY
GEORGE
That *signpost* tells nothing of how the Great Snake uprooted every tree on this hill with the force of its back, stripping—

*NANCY* laughs. *GEORGE* looks at her.

NANCY
Oh come on, it’s funny, there are tons of trees on this hill, look around!

You’re not listening.

NANCY
Sorry. *(Pause.)*

GEORGE
The Great Snake uprooted the trees—

NANCY
All of them— *(Beat.)*

GEORGE
With the force of its back, stripping bare the land, stealing the harvest and swallowing the people, their skulls are at the bottom of the lake.

NANCY
What people?

GEORGE
Your people.

Whoa.

NANCY
You young ones, you just don’t know.

Know what?

NANCY
You just don’t know.

NANCY
I’ll tell you what I don’t know, I don’t know why you came back. *(Beat.)* You’re gone forever, then you come back and tell me this *story*, and that these are my *people*, and that—
NANCY, Continued

(Beat.) Look, I get that your parents died of alcohol poisoning and you left the reservation for my grandmother—

GEORGE

Stop!

NANCY

(Almost taunting.) Okay, fine, I think the trees grew back when the white folks came.

GEORGE

Ha!

NANCY

I think the white folks planted gardens and farmed, and now we have vegetables and fruit.

GEORGE

(Sarcastic.) Because we never had vegetables and fruit before.

NANCY

The signpost says they built roads and hospitals.

GEORGE

(With irony.) Yeah, and schools.

NANCY

Yeah, and schools. (Pause.)

GEORGE

What are we even doing here?

NANCY

Waiting for the lights.

GEORGE

Why did you bring me here? (NANCY looks at him, then stands and reads the signpost. He watches her.) You are so young. (Pause. NANCY reads the signpost.) Sit down.

NANCY still reads, then sits.

NANCY

By the way, not all the people were swallowed. (Beat.) The signpost says two children were spared.

GEORGE

It does, does it.
NANCY

Yup. (Beat.) Two orphans.

GEORGE laughs.

GEORGE

The signpost says that! Well, that’s right, the signpost is right! There were two orphans, good for the signpost! Two orphans took wood from a tree and—

NANCY

Like mom. (Pause.)

GEORGE

Your mother is not an orphan.

NANCY

We should go.

GEORGE

(Quietly.) Your mother is not an orphan.

GEORGE is very still.

NANCY

I brought you here because you looked sad, I wanted to show you they still honor your people. (Beat.) We come here a lot, to this hill, and I actually know lots of the stories.

GEORGE

Stories! (He gestures to the signpost.) From the Chamber of Commerce?

NANCY

It’s something.

GEORGE

So is the dried skin on my foot. (Silence.)

NANCY

Why did you leave? I never understood that, why?

GEORGE

I didn’t want to. (Beat.) I thought your grandmother—

NANCY

Please don’t bring her into this.
I thought your grandmother would respect—

She did.

That’s a lie!

It’s all a lie, isn’t it, a hoax, a bedtime story told by the Chamber of Commerce to make us feel soft and gooey.

Your grandmother baptized your mother.

I said don’t bring her into this—

When your mother was born— (Beat.) Nancy. (Beat.) They’re your people too. (Beat.) Please. (She softens. So does he.) We didn’t have much, your grandmother and I, we had a small house, very small, leaks in the roof, I just had left the reservation, and— (Beat.) My sisters were angry because I left, but I had your grandmother, and we had our house, it was on top of the hill and we could see the lake when the leaves fell.

I—I know that house, I’ve seen that house.

You have?

Grandma showed me, just before she died, she— (Pause.) A family lives there now, they don’t have any money, it’s still falling apart, but I’ve seen them, the kids with their long black hair playing in the yard, she showed me, I’ve watched them play, I— (Beat.)

She showed you?

Just before she died. (Pause.)

I loved that house.
Me too. (Beat.)

I wanted your mother to have something, something from my family, so I carved that snake. But your grandmother, “Snakes are evil,” she said.

She always said that.

She wagged her finger in my face, “They tempted Eve in the garden.” (NANCY laughs. He laughs too. Silence. They are very close right now, and very tender.) She took it away, she— (Silence.)

That’s why you left? (Beat.)

I—

My mother was three years old. (She stands.) You could have made another snake.

That’s not—

This is Not the End of “Ninety Degrees”
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes
PAGE TWENTY-SEVEN

CHARACTERS: HANK; 30. ROGER; Hank’s older brother.

SCENE ONE

AT RISE: HANK and ROGER sit with their gear on a rock half-way to the peak of Mount Marcy in the Adirondacks.

HANK

(Wistfully.) Morton Tender Quick.

ROGER

What?

HANK

You use too much, if you use too much, you can’t—

ROGER

I don’t use too much, I don’t use any. (HANK laughs.) What’s wrong with you?

HANK

What’s wrong with you?

ROGER

Nothing’s wrong with—

HANK

You’ve stopped using Morton Tender Quick, that’s what!

ROGER

You’re ridiculous.

HANK

I’m not the one who lives in the best hunting grounds in the country and doesn’t eat—

ROGER stands.

ROGER

I’m done with this conversation.

HANK

What, you like string beans now? Brussels sprouts?
ROGER

Shut up.

HANK

I hear avocados have lots of nutrients, you growing any up here in the mountains? Nothing like a chick-pea pot-pie! (ROGER starts walking away.) Come on, I’m kidding. (ROGER freezes. Beat. HANK stands too.) So, shall we?

ROGER

(He turns to face Hank.) Not yet.

Pause. HANK sits, then lies on the ground with his hands folded behind his head.

HANK

Suit yourself. Morton Tender Quick, rub it into a good, fresh slab of venison, mmmmmm.

ROGER, still standing, stares at HANK. BLACKOUT.

SCENE TWO

AT RISE: They’ve climbed higher. HANK has hurt his ankle. ROGER kneels beside him.

ROGER

How bad is it?

HANK

Bad.

ROGER opens his backpack and takes out medical tape. He starts to bandage HANK’s ankle. HANK grimaces or groans.

ROGER

This is gonna hurt.

HANK

(Through his teeth.) It’s okay, thanks man.

HANK finishes bandaging ROGER’s ankle.
ROGER

That should do it.

HANK tries to put some weight on his hurt ankle. He winces or moans. They both sit. Silence.

HANK

I’m sorry.

ROGER

Whatever, some stupid rock, we’ve all done it.

Silence. ROGER pauses, then pulls a small, very old manual out of his pocket and hands it to HANK. HANK thumbs through the pages.

HANK

I can’t believe you still have this.

ROGER

He gave it to me, just before he— (Beat.)

HANK


ROGER

You sound just like him. (Beat.) You’re away ten years and if I closed my eyes, that could have been him reading, just like he used to— (Beat.)

HANK

You remember when I pranked Aunt Pam? (ROGER smiles.) She thought I was dad on the phone, I told her I needed some money, I could have gotten anything I wanted.

ROGER

Of course I remember, I’m the one who got in trouble. (HANK laughs.) Somehow, I’m the one who got in trouble, he and I never did— (Beat.)

HANK

I know. (Beat.)

ROGER

And now he’s gone. (He takes the manual from HANK and puts it in his backpack.) This is the one, of all forty-six high peaks, this is the one.
HANK
Yeah. (Beat.) Number forty-five, though, that was a beast.

ROGER
We were together then, all of us, even mom. (Pause.)

HANK
I know you took care of them.

ROGER
That’s right.

HANK
Both of them, and of the land.

ROGER
Yeah?

HANK
I know it was hard.

ROGER
You’re right, it was hard.

HANK
You’ll—

ROGER
Mom was real bad, especially at the end.

HANK
I know.

ROGER
And dad, he and I never saw things the same—

HANK
Jesus Roger, you’ll get your reward. (Beat.)

ROGER
What’s that supposed to mean?

HANK
You know.
No, tell me. (Beat.)

HANK
The will? (Beat.) That’s what this is all about, isn’t it? That’s why I’m here—

ROGER
You don’t know—

HANK
The reading, it’s tomorrow, we both know—

ROGER
I took care of them and I took care of the land because that was the right thing to—

HANK
Exactly, and now you’ll get your reward.

Silence. They hate each other. ROGER softens.

ROGER
How’s your ankle?

HANK
It hurts.

ROGER
I’ll look for some wood to make a splint. (He starts looking for a stick.) Keep it elevated.

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK.

SCENE THREE

AT RISE: The light is fading. HANK wears compressed bandages and a makeshift splint. He carries a walking stick. They’re on their way down.

HANK
I can’t go any farther.

ROGER
The sun is going down.
HANK
I don’t care.

He sits and props his ankle on a rock to elevate it.

ROGER
Great, what are we supposed to do?

HANK
I don’t know, just give me a minute.

ROGER
Your ankle is swelling, I can see it from here.

HANK
I know.

ROGER starts pacing.

ROGER
It’s late, we might not see anyone, I could get down the mountain in a couple hours, maybe less.

HANK
Roger.

ROGER
I could find a ranger station, come back for you.

ROGER! (Beat.)

HANK
What?

ROGER
Stop, just sit for a minute, I’ll be okay in a minute. (Silence. ROGER sits.) Got anything left to eat? (ROGER pulls out some carrots and water.) Carrots, mmm, good for you.

ROGER
Shut up Hank.

HANK
What? (Silence.) You’re such a child.
Hank—

ROGER

HANK
Just like when we were kids, always trying to hurt him—

ROGER

You know nothing about this—

HANK
I remember when you shot that deer, not even in season, a doe!

ROGER

She was dying—

HANK
You hypocrite, you kill an animal to make dad mad, then you stop killing animals to make him mad, what’s with you? (Beat.) You know, the last time I talked to Dad we talked about you.

ROGER

I’m sure you did.

HANK

We fought.

ROGER

What could you and Dad possibly have fought about? He adored you, I’m the one he— (Silence, a realization.) You fought about me?

HANK
He told me he was thinking of changing his will. (ROGER freezes.) I assumed he’d leave the land to you, you know, because— (Beat.) Your reward. (Silence. They hate each other.) So I told him— (ROGER stands and starts pacing.) Are you listening? I told him that was fine with me, that he was better off leaving the land to you, that if he left it to me…. 

ROGER

Yeah?

HANK

Steph and I—

ROGER

Steph?

Silence. They hate each other.
HANK

Yeah, Steph and I had talked it over, if Dad left me the land, we were gonna— (*Beat.*) Never mind.

ROGER

No, what? (*Pause.*)

HANK

We were gonna sell it.

*ROGER laughs.*

ROGER

Of *course* you and Steph were gonna sell it, what else would you do?

HANK

That’s right, actually, what else *would* we do? We haven’t lived here for ten years, there’s nothing for either of us here.

ROGER

Yes, you’ve both made that perfectly clear.

What’s that supposed to mean?

HANK

You *could* take care of the land, you could take care of *something* for once in your life. (*Beat.*) Who would you sell it to, you and Steph?

I’m not sure, we talked about—

ROGER


We talked about—

ROGER

Would you sell it to me? (*Pause. ROGER stands right above HANK.*) Well, would you sell it to me?

*Pause. HANK stares up at ROGER.*
HANK

(Very quiet.) You couldn’t afford it. (Beat.) It doesn’t matter anyway. (ROGER freezes, then slowly moves to sit about as far from HANK as he can.) Okay. Then let’s talk about Morton Tender Quick. (Nothing from ROGER.) You used to love venison.

ROGER

A lot changes in ten years. (Pause.) Ask Steph.

HANK

You rub in the Quick, just the right amount, then cook that meat, simmer it over the fire, let the Quick do its job.

ROGER

Shut up Hank.

HANK

Then you tear into it, you need good strong teeth. (ROGER stands.) Venison is delicious if you have good strong teeth.

ROGER

You ready?

HANK

And the juice…. (Beat.) Roger. (Beat.) I don’t think I can move.

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK.

SCENE FOUR

AT RISE: It’s dark. HANK leans on ROGER, who carries a flashlight. HANK’s pain is intense.

HANK

Are, are you gonna—

He can’t continue.

This is Not the End of “Page Twenty-Seven”
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes
GOODBYE

CHARACTERS:  
LUCY; Anita’s sister, early 30s.  
ANITA; late 30s.  
DEAD ANITA; like Anita, but grotesque.  
TOBIAS; Lucy’s husband, early 30s.

AT RISE:  
The stage is split. On one side, ANITA works out [sit-ups, push-ups, weights, etc.] in her basement in Lake Placid. LUCY sits on a suitcase, and TOBIAS stands. On the other side, DEAD ANITA watches from a chair.

LUCY  
I’m sorry we’ll miss the race.

ANITA  
It’s okay.

DEAD ANITA  
It’s not okay!

LUCY  
I wish you had told us, we would have planned differently, we would have stayed.

TOBIAS  
Lucy….

LUCY  
(To TOBIAS.) I know. (To ANITA.) You’ll call me? When it’s over?

DEAD ANITA  
Tell them about the crocodile!

ANITA  
Sure.

DEAD ANITA  
Tell them what you’ve learned—

TOBIAS  
Thanks Anita, it was great to see you.

ANITA  
Yeah, you too.
DEAD ANITA
—about your research, where he lives, at the bottom of the lake, tell them about his scales, his eyes, you’ve seen him, you know he’s real, tell them!

LUCY

2.4 miles….

ANITA

Yeah.

DEAD ANITA
Forget the race! The race doesn’t matter!

LUCY
We’re so proud of you, you know, all of us.

TOBIAS
Lucy….

LUCY
(She gestures to the air.) And here, of all places!

DEAD ANITA
(With devastation.) You’ve seen him….

LUCY
There’s so much history, and the mountains, we’ve been here only a weekend and have already climbed two!

ANITA
No high peaks. (Beat.)

LUCY
Why do you do that?

DEAD ANITA
You’ve seen him, you’ve let him in, tell them about your plan—

TOBIAS
It’s nothing—Lucy, we have to go.

ANITA
Okay.

DEAD ANITA
It’s not okay!
LUCY
It’s not only the mountains, it’s also the air, people used to come here just for that cold northern air, sleep on porches, they’d come to heal…. (DEAD ANITA laughs.) You like it here?

Pause. DEAD ANITA stares at ANITA.

I do.

DEAD ANITA
Liar!

Tell dad I said hi?

LUCY
Why don’t you call him?

DEAD ANITA
You’ve let that monster in and he’s turning your heart to stone, right under your nose!

ANITA
I call him.

When?

ANITA
I’ve been busy.

DEAD ANITA
And stones fall, they fall like dead weights in the water!

LUCY
(Sarcastic.) Training? (Pause.)

TOBIAS
Lucy—

LUCY
You’re really staying?

DEAD ANITA
You are a stone! And you know—
ANITA
Of course I’m staying, where would I go? This is where I live.

DEAD ANITA
—you know you’ll never leave, just like that crocodile, you’ve planned it, you’ll haunt that lake, all alone, your skin turned to green scales, your eyes bulging in the water—

LUCY
You don’t have to— (Beat.)

DEAD ANITA
(Whispering, hoarsely.) You know you’ll swim your 2.4 miles, you’ll get your medal, then you’ll—

She chokes on her own words.

ANITA
Everything is fine, I’m happy here…. (Beat.) You should go.

Pause. LUCY stands and picks up the suitcase. DEAD ANITA stands.

DEAD ANITA
Tell them how you feel! (She tries to cross into the other playing area but is pushed back into her chair by some unseen force.) You never tell them how you feel.

LUCY
We don’t have to— (Beat.)

DEAD ANITA
(Exhausted, from her chair.) That’s your problem, you swallow it all up, you don’t let anyone help, and then….

ANITA
As soon as this is over, I’ll call, and I’ll visit, maybe I’ll even move back.

This is Not the End of “Goodbye”
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes
PART OF YOUR BODY

CHARACTERS: AVA; 40s. JONATHAN; 30s.

AT RISE: JONATHAN reads the newspaper while sitting on a bench in Corning Park in Albany at dusk. AVA sits beside him. The streetlamp is lit. AVA looks at her watch.

AVA

They’re calling the vote.

JONATHAN

I know.

AVA shivers. JONATHAN reads.

AVA

And here we are, sitting in the cold, looking at that building, that same goddamn building.

JONATHAN

You’re looking at that building, I’m reading the paper.

AVA

What are you reading? (Beat.) Oh.

JONATHAN

It’s ridiculous.

AVA

Why?

JONATHAN

I don’t know where she gets off. She doesn’t work in Albany or even in the industry, she’s just—

AVA

A local.

JONATHAN

No, a dumbass.

AVA

A regular person.
And a liar.

JONATHAN

AVA

Jonathan.

JONATHAN

I’m serious. I’m tired of all these “regular people” polluting our conversations—

AVA

With their first-amendment—

JONATHAN

No, with their “opinions.”

AVA

You mean with their first-amendment—

JONATHAN

God, Ava, you know what I mean…. (Beat.)

AVA

Okay.

JONATHAN puts down the newspaper.

JONATHAN

So?

AVA

What?

JONATHAN

Your vote. (Silence.) Ava, you can’t vote yes, it’s crazy.

AVA

You’re the one who did the research.

JONATHAN

That’s not what I mean.

AVA

You’re the one who gave me the numbers, the testimonials.

JONATHAN

You can’t win this one Ava.
AVA

So? (Beat.) I’m still thinking.

JONATHAN

You vote “yes” and you screw your re-election.

AVA

I know, I said I’m still thinking.

JONATHAN

Fine.

He stands, restless, and paces. AVA looks towards the building.

AVA

Do you know the staircase in there?

JONATHAN

Jesus, Ava, we’re talking about the vote. (Pause. JONATHAN sits back down and rubs his temples.) Go ahead, tell me about the staircase.

AVA

The one with the faces.

JONATHAN

Yeah.

AVA

Someone carved those faces by hand.

JONATHAN

Please get to the point.

AVA


JONATHAN

Sure.

AVA

You’d expect those, even Harriet Beecher Stowe and Walt Whitman.

AVA

Ava.
AVA
But the others, did you ever notice? All those other faces, the ones you don’t recognize, those
faces, did you ever— (She shivers abruptly. Silence. She shivers abruptly again.) Jonathan.

JONATHAN
What?

AVA
I need to close my eyes. (JONATHAN covers his face with his hands.) I can’t keep my eyes open, please.

JONATHAN
Sshhhh…

AVA
Silence. AVA sleeps. JONATHAN gently removes himself from her and starts packing up their papers. He buttons up his coat, looks at her, then starts to walk away. She wakes abruptly. He stops in his tracks. She takes a moment to register her surroundings.

AVA
Where are you going?

JONATHAN
I’m just stretching my legs.

AVA
Were you leaving? (Pause. JONATHAN sits back down.) I used to get those all the time, you know. They’re called sleep attacks. (Pause.) You were leaving, you were gonna leave me. (Beat.) So I couldn’t vote.

JONATHAN
No.

AVA
I understand.

JONATHAN
They’re counting heads.
AVA
I said I understand. (*Pause.*) I used to fall asleep in class, while driving, at the movies, even doing sit-ups at the gym. (*Beat.*) I went to a sleep center just outside the city, they gave me a free sandwich and talked with me about how part of my body *misbehaves.* (*Beat.*) I don’t get them as much anymore, the sleep attacks, I don’t know why. (*Beat.*) I almost miss them. (*Pause.*)

JONATHAN

(*Gently.*) Come on, let’s go inside.

She doesn’t move from the bench.

AVA
I do miss them. (*Beat.*) They gave me an excuse to cut out, to stop.

JONATHAN

Ava.

AVA
I don’t have any excuses now, I move so fast, all day, every day.

JONATHAN

We all move fast.

AVA
I don’t know who I am anymore, or where I am. I never see Isabel, she’ll be six tomorrow and I can’t remember the last time I sat down with her for a meal. I creep into her bedroom every night when I get home, she’s already asleep, her little head sunk into the pillow, cheeks so pale, like moonlight…. (*Pause.*)

JONATHAN

You know, when I started working for you, I believed in everything you believe in.

AVA
You don’t anymore?

*This is Not the End of “Part of Your Body”*
*Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes*
LITTLE HANDS

CHARACTERS: RACHEL; 30s.
JENNIFER; 30s.
JANE; 30s.

AT RISE: JENNIFER, RACHEL, and JANE drink wine on the patio of a vineyard overlooking Seneca Lake. JANE’s glass is empty.

RACHEL
Look at that lake, fucking gorgeous.

JENNIFER
I feel like we’re in Switzerland.

RACHEL
(Teasing.) What the fuck do you know about Switzerland?

JENNIFER
I’ve seen pictures! (Wistfully.) Some people do this all the time you know.

Yeah, bitches.

They laugh. They sip their wine.

JENNIFER
That blue…..

I know.

RACHEL
Reminds me of Julia’s eyes.

Pause; awkward.

JANE
Do either of you want another? (Beat.)

JENNIFER
I’m fine, thanks Jane.
Yeah, me too.

JANE

I’ll be right back.

JANE takes her empty glass and exits.

JENNIFER

I shouldn’t have said that.

RACHEL

What?

JENNIFER

About Julia.

RACHEL

She needs to deal with it, if she doesn’t, he’ll—

JENNIFER

I know, but we’re supposed to be helping.

RACHEL

We are helping.

JENNIFER

Yeah, by talking about— (JANE returns with her glass full. Awkward pause.) What’d you get this time?

JANE

Oh. I thought I’d try the Riesling.

RACHEL

Nice choice.

JANE

Yeah.

JANE takes a large sip of her wine.

JENNIFER

How is it?

JANE

It’s good.
Good. (Pause.)

HOW IS JULIA ANYWAY?

RACHEL

JANE

SHE’S GREAT.

JENNIFER

Yeah?

JANE

JENNIFER

Jane.

JANE

It’s okay, I want to know, I miss seeing her, I’ve been so busy.

JENNIFER

She misses seeing you, too, and— (Beat.)

JANE

(By now, JANE’s glass is empty again.) I’m gonna get another. Anything for you?

JENNIFER

No thanks. (JANE exits with her empty glass.) We should not have come here, I don’t know what we were thinking.

RACHEL

It’s what she wanted.

JENNIFER

Yeah, but—

RACHEL

We thought it would be fun.

JENNIFER

Rachel.

RACHEL

That we could splurge—

JENNIFER

(Sarcastic.) Forget for a while?
RACHEL
We never fucking do this. *(Beat.)*

JENNIFER
I know. *(Beat.)*

RACHEL
Fucking stupid.

*JANE returns with her glass full.*

JANE
I thought I’d try the Chardonnay. *(Beat.)* So, what were you guys talking about? *(Beat.)*

JENNIFER
The lake.

JANE
It sure is beautiful. Helps you forget, doesn’t it.

RACHEL
Yeah.

JANE
I remember when we used to go the beach at the top of the lake, when Suzie was— *(Beat.)*

JENNIFER
Jane.

JANE
That little beach, you know, you met us there with Julia once? Suzie would dig in the sand, her hands wrapped around a pink plastic shovel, making these perfect little piles, so perfect, such little hands.

RACHEL
Maybe we should go?

JANE
The three of us would swim all day, the water so cool, blue…

*JANE finishes her drink.*

RACHEL
He’s an ass, Jane, you’re better off.
RACHEL takes JANE’s hand. JANE pulls away and laughs.

JANE
Maybe without him— (Beat.) But— (Beat.) I work every day and barely make enough for the rent, let alone to— (Beat.)

JENNIFER
Jane, honey….

JANE
I’m thinking about getting a second job, maybe selling tickets at the movie theater or—

JENNIFER
Jane.

JANE
What else can I do? (JENNIFER reaches for JANE.) I don’t know how you hold it all together, Jenny, how you pay your bills and still have time for Julia.

JENNIFER
I—

JANE
How you don’t scream or fill your pockets with rocks and walk into the lake.

JANE—

RACHEL

JANE
I’m ready to walk into the lake, I am. (Beat.)

JENNIFER
I have both of you. (Beat.)

JANE
All those blues swirling like birds over my head. (Beat.) I can’t do it.

This is Not the End of “Little Hands”
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes
WAR/BATHTUB

CHARACTERS:  
AMINA; 8.  
SIMONE; 20s, Amina’s mom.

AT RISE:  
AMINA is taking a bath in the apartment where she and SIMONE live in Syracuse, New York. SIMONE reads a magazine.

AMINA
Mama, the Humboldt penguins are from South America, did you know that? I learned that at the library, Ms. Hennedy let us look for books and I found a book about penguins. (Pause.) What are you reading?

SIMONE
Nothing, honey, I’m not reading anything.

Beat. SIMONE puts down her magazine.

AMINA
Okay. (Beat.) I didn’t know what “Humboldt” meant, I thought it might be the name of a person, maybe the person who found the penguins or discovered them or something, but it’s not, it’s the name of a current, a very strong current, it runs all the way from Antarctica, you know, where it’s really cold and where most other penguins live, like Emperor penguins, and the current goes all the way from Antarctica to the Equator!

SIMONE
How do you know these things?

AMINA
I learned that at the library too. (SIMONE touches AMINA in some gentle way.) Lisa was there, at the library.

SIMONE
She was?

AMINA
She was. I’m so excited, Mama, I’ve wanted to go to the zoo since, for as long as I can remember, and I’m going, I’m going tomorrow.

SIMONE
I know.

AMINA
To the zoo...
SIMONE pours water over AMINA’s hair.

What was Lisa doing at the library?

SIMONE

Why?

AMINA

Well, that’s not really part of her—

SIMONE

I told her our group was going.

AMINA

I wish you wouldn’t have done that.

SIMONE

Why? (Beat.)

AMINA

I just wish you wouldn’t have done that.

SIMONE

She showed me the book about penguins. She knows I love penguins. Ms. Hennedy didn’t want us talking, because we were in the library, but I think it was okay.

AMINA

I’m sure it was okay.

SIMONE rubs shampoo into AMINA’s hair.

AMINA

Ms. Hennedy is always so mean. She doesn’t like us very much, she treats us differently, I think because we’re poor.

SIMONE

That’s not true, why would you think that?

AMINA

I don’t know. Lisa talked to her for a little while, before she showed me the book about penguins, and she was so mad, Lisa was so mad, and I asked her what was wrong and she told me that Ms. Hennedy made her mad.

SIMONE

Well, that doesn’t mean that Ms. Hennedy doesn’t like you.
AMINA
I guess. (SIMONE rinses AMINA’s hair.) But Ms. Hennedy is always so mean to us, she’s always so careful and she doesn’t even really look at us, and Lisa said— (Pause.) I can’t wait to see the penguins. Penguins are really social animals, they do this thing called a “display,” where they show how they’re feeling or what they need, but the Humboldt penguins are really shy, they have a harder time showing other penguins what’s on their minds. And you’re not gonna believe this— (Beat.)

This is Not the End of “War/Bathtub”
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes
AS LITTLE CONSCIOUS THOUGHT AS POSSIBLE

CHARACTERS: 
JEROME
MAGGIE; Jerome’s ex-wife

AT RISE: 
JEROME and MAGGIE stand in separate parts of the stage, each lit separately. The sound of waves and wind. They are in the Cupsogue of their respective memories.

MAGGIE
It was cold, January. I remember the wind clipping the backs of our necks.

JEROME
Months had passed.

MAGGIE
We parked before the frozen sand got too treacherous, then climbed over the fence down the dunes, not on the ocean side, by the inlet, towards the bay, holding onto each other.

JEROME
This time I drove by myself with the windows open and parked in the lot, I could feel the sun rising from the pavement, I tried not to remember— (Beat.)

MAGGIE
I stumbled a little near the bottom, maybe a rock or clump of rotted wood. Jerome stopped and waited for me.

JEROME
But I did remember, so I stood at the top of the dunes, by the fence, and looked before going down.

MAGGIE
I watched his face while he waited. Soft, not like the wind.

JEROME
I didn’t want— (Beat.)

MAGGIE
I took his hand and we hiked through dead cattails, water seeping over the bottoms of our boots. It was hard to look straight ahead, the sun was bright and the wind….

JEROME
Not this time.
MAGGIE
But we looked anyway. We shielded our eyes and scanned the sandbars, and there they were, an entire herd!

JEROME
The sun warmed my face while I looked in the distance.

MAGGIE
I saw them first, I let out a whoop. (She whoops, then silence.) I felt something giant rise inside me.

JEROME
I tried not to think about— (Beat.)

MAGGIE
(She touches her belly) Like I had touched the universe. Jerome whooped too and the two of us started running, we couldn’t wait.

JEROME
I tried— (Beat.)

MAGGIE
When we got closer, we paused for a moment to catch our breath, then looked again, shielding our eyes against the sun, against the wind. They were right there, so close, so still.

JEROME
Then, in the distance, something moved.

MAGGIE
(A shift. She removes her hand from her belly.) Too still.

On the sandbars.

MAGGIE
I let go of his hand, I opened my fingers and his hand dropped like a stone.

JEROME
And in the water. Twenty of them.

MAGGIE
There were piles of stones in the water.

JEROME
Thirty of them.
MAGGIE
Small black stones, cold and dead, jutting from the sandbars, glistening in the sun like, like a herd of wet seals.

JEROME
Maybe forty, on the sandbar, in the water. They swam closer to me. (He makes some gesture.) I could see their faces.

This is Not the End of “As Little Conscious Thought As Possible” Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes
KINK

CHARACTERS:  KATIE; late teens.
              JIM; late teens.

AT RISE:    KATIE and JIM lean over a bar that
             separates them from the cracked 200-
             inch mirror-blank housed at the Corning
             Museum of Glass.

JIM
The LA Times called this the biggest event in science.

KATIE
This?

JIM
Bigger than the atomic bomb.

KATIE
Are you serious?

JIM
Well, not this, the real one, the one without the crack.

KATIE
Bigger than the bomb?

JIM
Yeah.

KATIE
It’s a mirror, Jim, in a glass museum.

JIM
It’s called a “mirror-blank,” the one without the crack is the largest piece of glass ever made.
(Pause.)

KATIE
Do you remember sixth grade?

JIM
A little.
KATIE
I built a camera out of a cardboard box for my science project, cut a square in the front, covered the square with tin foil, then pricked this teeny hole in the—(Beat.) I remember I took a picture of my dog out in the yard, by my dad’s shed, it was tricky because I needed to hold open the shutter for three seconds, and the dog couldn’t move that whole time or the picture would be blurry.

JIM
Okay.

KATIE
I used to love this stuff.

JIM
How did it work, the science? (Beat.)

KATIE
I don’t remember. (Beat.) But I took the paper out of the box and went into the bathroom and stirred the paper in some chemicals, then hung it on a wire to dry.

JIM
Did you win?

KATIE
No, I got the chicken pox and had to stay home. (JIM reaches out to her. She pulls away.) Whatever.

JIM
What about seventh grade?

KATIE
I probably gave up.

JIM
(Pause. Gesturing to the mirror-plain.) You know, even when that one cracked, he kept going, he annealed it—

KATIE
He what?

JIM
Annealed it. Cooled it. Just to see what would happen, to learn more about how glass worked.

KATIE
Must be nice. (Beat.)
Katie.

KATIE
What? (Beat.) Must be nice. To fuck up like that, then “anneal” it, just to see what would happen. (Beat.) To look in the mirror and see a giant crack and then just “learn” from your mistake, just like that, must be nice.

JIM
Should we leave?

KATIE
After the science fair, you know, I didn’t really give up. I went to the library and took out seven books about photography. I devoured those books. I couldn’t wait to study physics in high school, I wanted to understand the way light moved.

JIM
I remember.

KATIE
You do?

JIM
The first time I noticed you was in physics lab. Mr. Oliver blasted that laser beam around the room and we all ducked our heads because we thought the light would blind us, but not you, you stared right at him, you were so— (Beat.)

KATIE
What?

JIM
Brave. (Pause.)

KATIE
Physics lab, what a joke.

JIM
Don’t say that.

KATIE
What am I ever gonna do with physics lab?

JIM
I don’t know, go to college? (Pause, awkward.) I don’t know.
KATIE
What then? This guy? He fucked up with the first one, cracked the mirror, then built the “real” one and moved around the world, designing glass? (Beat.)

JIM
Yeah. (Beat.)

KATIE
And now the whole world is made of glass.

JIM
Katie.

KATIE
Optical fiber. Tiny cylinders of glass connecting the world, tiny cylinders no bigger than a human hair.

JIM
You know so much, you’re so—

KATIE
Connecting my mom’s cellphone to the school smartboard to Afghanistan to Libya to the fucking thing growing in my— (Pause.)

This is Not the End of “Kink”
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes
VOYEURISM

In a deep song voice with a melancholy tone
I heard that Negro sing, that old piano moan—

—Lanston Hughes, “The Weary Blues”

CHARACTERS:

JACKSON; 30s, white.
JOHN; 30s, white.
HUGH; a teenager, African-American.

AT RISE:

JACKSON and JOHN drink whiskey at a club on Lenox Avenue in Harlem in the 1920s. The blues play on the piano.

Listen to that Negro play.

JOHN

Yes, he’s quite talented.

JACKSON

So modern. (Beat.)

JOHN

How is Elizabeth?

JACKSON

She’s fine.

JOHN

Really?

JACKSON

Why do you ask?

JOHN

No reason really.

The blues play.

JACKSON

Coming from a black man’s soul. (Beat.) I’m insulted, you know.

JOHN

By the music?
By your question about Elizabeth.

Don’t be ridiculous.

I’m not.

Sarah saw Elizabeth at the club. She thought Elizabeth seemed tired. That’s all.

That’s none of Sarah’s business.

(He stands.) Now wait a minute.

(He waves JOHN back into his seat.) Settle down, I’m sorry. (Beat.) We came here to talk about business. (Beat.)

We did.

How are things at the office? (Beat.)

Slow.

No one’s buying insurance?

It’s 1928, no one’s thinking about the future.

Why not?

No one believes this will end.

Will it? (Beat.) Tell me, why should I invest in your insurance? Why should I spend extra money to protect my speculations when my dividends grow every year?
JOHN

That’s exactly what—

JACKSON

You say no one is thinking about the future, I say this is the future.

JOHN

This is not the future.

JACKSON

Then what is it? (Beat.)

JOHN

Ask Elizabeth.

JACKSON

(He stands.) What right do you have, or Sarah, to bring my wife into—

JOHN

That’s not it.

JACKSON

Then what?

    He looks around, then sits.

JOHN

They’re friends, they, talk to each other.

JACKSON

Don’t you dare—

JOHN

They talk about their lives, I’m telling you to ask Elizabeth. (Beat.) Ask her what this is, this place, this time that we live in.

JACKSON

You’ve done this since I’ve known you.

JOHN

Done what?

JACKSON

Judged me.
JOHN

That’s ridiculous.

JACKSON

Is it? (Beat.)

JOHN

I thought we were talking about business. (Beat.)

JACKSON

We were, we are.

JOHN

Then let’s talk about business.

Pause. The blues play. HUGH approaches the table.

HUGH

Can I get you anything else, sirs? (Beat.)

JACKSON

What do you say, John? Another? (Beat.)

JOHN

Fine.

Pause. The blues play. HUGH nods, exits. The blues play.

JACKSON

Coming from a black man’s soul.

Pause. The blues play.

JOHN

How is Elizabeth.

Pause. The blues play.

JACKSON

Tired.

They laugh. HUGH returns with their drinks.
Anything else, sirs?

**HUGH**

That will be all. Thank you. (*Hugh turns to leave.*) One moment, young man. (*Hugh returns to the table.*) Do you know the name of this song?

It’s called “The Weary Blues,” sir.

**JACKSON**

“The Weary Blues.” Yes. I can tell.

**JOHN**

How can you tell?

**JACKSON**

I suppose they do all sound the same, I suppose they all could be called “The Weary Blues.” What do you think, young man?

I suppose so, sir.

*JACKSON laughs.*

**JACKSON**

Good boy. Thank you. That will be all. (*Hugh exits. The blues play.*) Elizabeth is tired. She’s been tired. (*Beat.*) Is Sarah tired?

She’s not.

**JACKSON**

I don’t know what to do. (*Beat.*) She wanders through the parlor like a spirit. She doesn’t eat, not with me anyway. I don’t know if she sleeps. She stays in her room all night and doesn’t like when I step in, even just for a moment, with fresh flowers or her calling cards, let alone…. (*The blues play.*) Listen to that tune.

I’ll have Sarah talk to her.

**JACKSON**

Would you? Thank you, John.

**JOHN**

Anytime. (*The blues play.*) Listen, Jackson, I’ve got to get going, early day tomorrow.
JACKSON

I thought things were slow?

JOHN

They are, that’s why tomorrow’s an early day.

JACKSON

Time to figure out a battle plan?

JOHN

We’ve been watching the market.

JACKSON

Yes, we have too.

JOHN

We think we know how to convince investors that it’s prudent to—

This is Not the End of “Voyeurism”
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes
STEAL

CHARACTERS:  
  PETER; 30s.  
  MARCUS; 30s.  
  EARNEST; 30s.

AT RISE:  
  The stage is split. On one side, PETER types UAW notes for a Local 425 meeting in Buffalo in 1941. On the other side, MARCUS and EARNEST smoke cigarettes outside the Buffalo Stamping Plant in 2011.

PETER
“For immediate release, June 1941….” (He thinks.)

MARCUS
You just started, you don’t know yet.

EARNEST
Know what?

MARCUS
What happens. (They smoke.)

PETER
“The United Auto Workers Local 425 invites all auto workers to its first meeting….” (He thinks.)

EARNEST
What do you mean, “what happens,” what’s that supposed to mean?

MARCUS
When the shit hits. (They smoke.)

PETER
“…outside the assembly plant in Buffalo, New York.”

  He leans back and looks at the ceiling.

MARCUS
And the shit is going to hit. Did you see the release?

EARNEST
Yeah, so?
MARCUS  
No one’s buying those big cars anymore.

EARNEST  
That’s not our fault. (*They smoke.*)

PETER  
“We demand a thirty-hour week, we demand any extra hours be divided among the unemployed for whom we advocate, we demand the end to egregious assembly-line speed-up….” (*He thinks.*)

MARCUS  
The shit is going to hit, and there’s nothing you can do about it.

EARNEST  
Nothing *I* can do about it?

MARCUS  
You’re on your own for this one.

EARNEST  
What’s that supposed to mean? (*They smoke.*)

PETER  
”….we demand minimum pay rates, we demand union recognition….” (*He thinks.*)

MARCUS  
They’re going to lay *you* off, you’re new.

EARNEST  
They can’t.

MARCUS  
They can, and they will. (*They smoke.*)

PETER  
“Together, we can ensure our conditions are fair and safe….” (*He thinks.*)

This is Not the End of “Steal”
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes
RIP VAN WINKLE

CHARACTERS: RIP VAN WINKLE.
DAME VAN WINKLE; his wife.
RIP JUNIOR; his son.
NICHOLAS VEDDER; owner of the local pub.
THE GHOSTS OF HENRY HUDSON’S CREW.

SETTING: In a small town near the Hudson River.

SCENE ONE

AT RISE: Fiddle music plays. THE GHOSTS OF HENRY HUDSON’S CREW watch as RIP VAN WINKLE enters a 1970s kitchen carrying a cup of coffee, DAME VAN WINKLE on his heels. The fiddle music fades.

DAME VAN WINKLE
I don’t see why you can’t get work.

RIP VAN WINKLE
I have work.

DAME VAN WINKLE
I mean over the summer.

RIP VAN WINKLE
I work over the summer.

DAME VAN WINKLE
Bullshit.

RIP VAN WINKLE
The school-year is tough, I use summers to heal, that’s my work.

DAME VAN WINKLE
Take a week to heal and to play, then get a job. Rip Junior needs the money.

RIP VAN WINKLE
(He looks at his cup of coffee.) There’s more to this life than—
DAME VAN WINKLE

Ha!

RIP VAN WINKLE

I need time to put myself back together again, and we need time to read, to think, to—

DAME VAN WINKLE

Time to be lazy you mean, when the roof is leaking and Rip Junior has no college fund.

*RIP VAN WINKLE finishes drinking his coffee. He sets the empty cup on the table.*

RIP VAN WINKLE

I’m going for a walk.

DAME VAN WINKLE

While you’re looking at the trees, why don’t you “think” a little about your responsibility to Rip Junior. Your salary is peanuts, Rip, and without money your son will not have a future.

Fiddle music plays as DAME VAN WINKLE takes the empty cup and exits.

SCENE TWO

AT RISE: THE GHOSTS OF HENRY HUDSON’S CREW move the table and turn into trees. RIP VAN WINKLE walks through the trees, his hands in his pockets. Fiddle music fades as RIP VAN WINKLE whistles a little, maybe to the same tune the fiddle just played.

RIP VAN WINKLE

Responsibility to Rip Junior, I know my responsibility, but— *(Beat. He stops walking. He continues walking.)* But my responsibility also is to— *(He touches one of the trees.)* Your branches bend with the wind, that’s what I need to do, bend with the wind.

GHOSTS

Bend with the wind…. The wind….

RIP VAN WINKLE

Huh, an echo in the forest, who would have thought? *(He sits and leans against the tree.)* Everyone moves so fast, even me, it’s time to stop and listen….
GHOSTS

Listen….

RIP VAN WINKLE
And now— (He removes a pipe and prepares to smoke. One of the GHOSTS takes the form of a man.) Oh, hello. (The GHOST nods.) I’m rebelling against society. Would you care to join me? (The GHOST sits. Silence.) Where are you from? (Pause.) That’s okay, we can be quiet. (RIP VAN WINKLE offers his pipe to the GHOST. The GHOST accepts.) Not many people smoke pipes anymore, I’m impressed. (The GHOST reaches into his pocket and removes a pouch of tobacco.) Oh. (The GHOST fills the pipe barrel. Fiddle music begins.) Wow. (RIP VAN WINKLE smells the tobacco.) Thanks. (He hears the fiddle music.) Do you hear something? It sounds like music….

RIP VAN WINKLE smokes the pipe. Fiddle music continues as the trees move slowly towards RIP VAN WINKLE, as if cooing or singing him a lullaby, until RIP VAN WINKLE falls into a deep sleep. Then, THE GHOSTS exit the stage. Magic.

SCENE THREE

AT RISE: RIP VAN WINKLE wakes. The fiddle music fades. RIP VAN WINKLE stands quickly. He has aged; his body isn’t as deft as it used to be. Stooped, he looks around. He heads in one direction, stops, is confused, heads in a different direction, then exits. Fiddle music begins when the stage is empty.

SCENE FOUR

AT RISE: RIP JUNIOR drinks at a bar. THE GHOSTS are frozen into various poses around the stage, as if they had been customers years ago. NICHOLAS VEDDER enters, wiping a mug clean. He sees RIP JUNIOR. Fiddle music fades.

NICOLAS

Hey.

RIP JUNIOR

Hey. (Pause.)
You should go home.

RIP JUNIOR

Get me another.

Silence. NICHOLAS pours another drink and gives it to RIP JUNIOR. RIP VAN WINKLE dashes into the bar.

NICHOLAS

Whoa. You okay old man?

RIP VAN WINKLE

I—I—the phone, the phone outside, it’s falling apart, I—I wonder, could I borrow the phone here?

Sure.

He hands RIP VAN WINKLE his cellphone. RIP VAN WINKLE stares at the cellphone. He’s not sure what to do with it. He hands it back to NICHOLAS.

RIP VAN WINKLE

I don’t understand. I don’t know—I don’t understand where I am.

NICHOLAS

Easy old man. Take a seat. (RIP VAN WINKLE sits.) You’re in Tarrytown, just north of the city. Can I get you a drink?

RIP VAN WINKLE

Yes, Tarrytown. Yes, a drink, please. (NICHOLAS pours RIP VAN WINKLE something stiff.) Thank you. (RIP VAN WINKLE drinks. His hands shake a bit.) Where—where is the library?

NICHOLAS

The library? What library? Oh, you mean the old library that used to be on North Broadway. They shut that down years ago. No more use value. Very sad…. You from around here? (Silence.) Okay….

RIP VAN WINKLE

The—the school? The high school?
NICHOLAS
Yeah, they shut that down too. Where have you been old man? Asleep for a hundred years? Things are more “efficient” now. Kids learn on their computers, take their tests, then compete in the workforce. *(NICHOLAS laughs.)* Except me, of course. And Rip Junior here. *(RIP VAN WINKLE freezes, gets it, then slowly turns to look at his son.)* Rip Junior still reads books. Right Rip? He’s got a pile of old books in his old home, falling apart, roof leaking since his daddy disappeared fifty years ago, but he’s got his books and he—

RIP JUNIOR
And I’m not giving them up.

NICHOLAS
And me?

RIP JUNIOR
Another?

*NICHOLAS gives RIP JUNIOR a look, then pours his drink.*

NICHOLAS
Me? I serve a barroom of ghosts. *(He hands RIP JUNIOR his drink, then leans on the bar and looks at RIP JUNIOR.)* Not much profit, but it does the spirit good.

*RIP JUNIOR sips, then takes out a pipe.*
*RIP VAN WINKLE stares at him.*

RIP JUNIOR
I’m going outside to smoke, old man. Would you care to join me?

This is Not the End of “Rip Van Winkle”
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes
IT GETS YOU

CHARACTERS: CHORUS; corporate leaders “disguised” as farmers. [May use farm implements alternatively as weapons and/or instruments.]

MARTHA; 40s.

JENNIFER; 20s.

AT RISE: MARTHA is selling vegetables at the Ithaca Farmers Market. The CHORUS is lit separately, anti-naturally, perhaps even horrifically.

CHORUS
We never would poison the people,
We do what we can to be good.
We’ve bought up the land and grown lots of corn,
Please won’t you buy our food?

JENNIFER walks to MARTHA’s stand. She fingers some vegetables.

“What is the source of our sickness?”
Consumers have asked on the news.
But we never would poison the people,
We have too much money to lose.

JENNIFER
What are these?

MARTHA
Green onions.

JENNIFER
Oh, how much are they?

MARTHA
A bundle for one dollar.

CHORUS
So what is the source of their sickness
If it isn’t the food in our cans?
Why are they coughing and clutching their chests
And seeing their doctors again?
I like green onions.

The market,
The market.

What about these?

Those are one dollar apiece.

What are they?

Zucchini squash.

I thought they might be cucumbers.

(She smiles.) They look like cucumbers.

We never would poison the people,
We care what all of you eat.
We want you to load up on this and on that
And buy whatever is cheap.

I’ve never made anything with zucchini squash, what do you do?

I like to sauté it with pasta or grill it over burgers, my little girl likes hers cubed and—

You have a little girl?

(She smiles.) She’s seven.

She’s seven and eats zucchini squash. (Beat. A moment.) Do you have any tomatoes?
MARTHA

Right here.

*She points to a bucket of tomatoes in front of JENNIFER. JENNIFER starts picking through the bucket.*

CHORUS

We never would poison the people,
We know that would ruin your meal.
But we have to do something to slash prices down
So you think that you’re getting a deal.

JENNIFER

*(Stealing a glance.)* You look familiar.

MARTHA

*(She laughs.)* Lots of people say that.

Did you grow up in town?

JENNIFER

I moved here ten years ago, met my husband about fifteen yards in that direction and—

*(Beat.*)

CHORUS

We never would poison the people,
But none of us get what we give,
And we’re all of us caught in the system,
And we have to make money to live.

JENNIFER

—and now you’re a farmer’s wife.

MARTHA

*(Smiling.*) I own the farm.

CHORUS

The market,
The market,
The produce market.
We have to make money to live.
MARTHA
Go ahead, try one. *(JENNIFER picks up a small tomato, hesitates.)* We don’t use pesticides and we rotate our crops regularly. *(Beat.)* Do you live in town?

CHORUS
We plant and we harvest,
We package and sell.

JENNIFER
I came up with friends, we wanted to spend time outside, get healthy, get back in touch with things.

MARTHA
Lots of people come for that.

JENNIFER
Is that why you came?

MARTHA
I visited with friends, like you, we lived in the city and wanted to hike, we found all these waterfalls.

JENNIFER
We saw a waterfall, that big one, right off the main road.

MARTHA
That’s where we swam.

JENNIFER
In the swimming hole, we saw that.

MARTHA
Anyway, something changed, I don’t know, inside me. *(Beat.)*

JENNIFER
What? *(Beat.)*

MARTHA
I breathed.

They laugh.

CHORUS
We plant and we process,
We sell and you buy.
JENNIFER
We hiked this morning, my friends and I, brought some apples with us and sat on a stone, I had never just sat on a stone before. We took off our shoes and waded in a stream and looked at the sky. Everything felt different, good, we didn’t even talk but I knew they were there, then we walked through town and I thought I could start a life here, slow down, grow things.

CHORUS
We have to make money to live.

JENNIFER
(She puts down the tomato.) But I have to get back to work, you know, the real world.

MARTHA
The real world?

CHORUS
And nobody eats from the earth anymore,
Everyone eats from a box.
You cram yourselves full with all of the junk
That we load onto very large trucks.

JENNIFER
(She laughs.) Yeah, where people only read about zucchini squash. (Beat.) I don’t know how you survive.

MARTHA
(She smiles.) I could say the same.

JENNIFER
How do you make money?

MARTHA
I make enough.

JENNIFER
Yeah, but— (Beat.)

CHORUS
We never would poison the people
At least not on purpose you see.
And we’re thankful for all of our options,
And that all of our markets are free.

JENNIFER
You know, my grandparents had a farm, a duck farm.
MARTHA

Really?

JENNIFER
Yeah, my grandfather used to tell stories about the Polish women who picked the ducks and about the whole cutting-them-open process, they did that, themselves, and the milk cow that died, and they buried it in a hole, my grandfather and his wife. They didn’t grow vegetables, but he was still connected, you know? (Beat.) They had to sell the farm, I never saw it, only heard the stories.

**This is Not the End of “It Gets You”**
**Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes**
PUTTING OFF

CHARACTERS: HANNAH; 70s.
        JOHN; 70s.

AT RISE: HANNAH lies in bed in her home in Seneca Falls. JOHN sits on a chair. It’s the beginning of the twentieth century. The room is dark.

HANNAH
I’m not ready John.

JOHN
Sshhh.

HANNAH
No, I’m not ready. (Silence.) Will you open the drapes? (JOHN opens the drapes. Sunlight pours into the room.) That’s better. (Silence.) When we were children, do you remember?

JOHN
Sshhh.

HANNAH
No, when we were children, maybe ten years old, your father owned the butcher shop on Fall Street, we’d make fun of you and your brothers, you always smelled of blood, but your house was grand, I was sweet on you. (JOHN takes her hand.) And your father hung those posters in the window, he was so angry, those women.

JOHN
Sshhh.

HANNAH
No, those women, they stood on the corner, some men too, a sort of parade, not many of them, but they were fierce, do you remember?

JOHN
Hannah, you need your rest. The doctor said—

HANNAH
I know what the doctor said. (Silence.) They were fierce. I was ten, but I remember them, they stood on that corner and marched to the church, the chapel, and the notice they placed in the Courier.

JOHN
Please, Hannah.
HANNAH
Let me finish. (Silence.) It got bad then, the other papers responded, “If our ladies will insist on voting and legislating, where, gentlemen, will be our dinners and our elbows? Where our domestic firesides and the holes in our stockings?” * I remember every word.

JOHN
Sshhh.

HANNAH
Do you remember? Your father, he looked at my mother on Tuesdays when she bought her meat, “you’d better mind your own,” he’d say. Do you remember any of that? (Silence.) My fingers trembled when he said that, every single Tuesday, I knew something…great was happening.

JOHN
Hannah, please. (Silence.)

HANNAH
But I did nothing. I was little, I know there’s not much I could have done then, but I did nothing afterwards, and time marched on, and history marched on, and now it’s just about to happen, the War is just about over and it’s going to happen, I can feel it, but I won’t be there, John.

JOHN
Hannah, please, the doctor.

This is Not the End of “Putting Off”
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes

* From The Oneida Whig, according to “Seneca Falls Convention”
SEXY DECOY

CHARACTERS:  PATRICK; 20s, Irish immigrant.
              MARANNE; 20s, Irish immigrant.

Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged,
Missing me one place search another,
I stop somewhere waiting for you.

—Walt Whitman, Song of Myself

AT RISE:  PATRICK fishes in the Niagara River.
          MARANNE sits in the shade and reads a
          book of poetry. The Erie Canal has just
          been completed.

MARANNE
(She reads. She’s a good reader.) “Is this then a touch? quivering me to a new identity,
Flames and ether making a rush for my veins, / Treacherous tip of me reaching out and
crowding to help them, / My flesh and blood playing out lightning to strike what is hardly
different from myself—”

PATRICK
You’d better stop that.

MARANNE
Why?

PATRICK
You know why.

MARANNE
(Flirting.) You’re crazy! (Beat.)

PATRICK
Okay. Keep going.

MARANNE
“On all sides prurient provokers stiffening my limbs—”

PATRICK
I like that. Read it again.

MARANNE
“On all sides—”
No, the end.

“Stiffening my limbs?”

Yes, I like that. *(MARANNE laughs. She reads to herself.)* I like when….

*(Flirting.)* When what? *(Pause, a shift.)*

Maranne, we finished. *(Pause.)*

I know.

You know?

Everyone knows.

I didn’t want to tell you.

But *this* is your home, Patrick, now it is.

Last week, three men followed me to the camp.

There’s trouble everywhere.

They imitated my voice, Maranne, “Look at the Mick,” they said, “climbing out of his dung, taking our—” Then they stopped, all three of them, stopped in my path and rolled up their shirtsleeves and their eyes got dark.

Patrick.

The foreman asked them to leave.
MARANNE

Good.

PATRICK

But then he looked at me too, like I was some sort of— (Beat.) This is not my home. I did my job, I dug that canal for fourteen months, I collected my pay yesterday, I’m going back. (Pause.)

MARANNE

I miss it too.

PATRICK

I know.

MARANNE

The hills and—

PATRICK

—the cold, gray sea. (Beat.)

MARANNE

My brothers. (Beat.) But we made it, Patrick, we made it to the end of the world.

PATRICK

So it seemed.

MARANNE

A promise kept. (She’s closer to him now, maybe playing with his fishing pole.) Home. (Pause.)

PATRICK

Maranne—

MARANNE

Are you going to catch anything? (PATRICK reels in his line. He smiles.) I’m hungry. What did you put on your line?

PATRICK

It’s a lure, a decoy.

MARANNE

A decoy?

PATRICK

Like duck hunters use. They build wooden ducks and float them down the river so real ducks think it’s safe. I carve wooden fish, I attach them to my line, I try to trick the real fish.
MARANNE
Can I see one? *(He shows her his decoy. She traces its lines with her fingers. This is very sensual. He watches her.)* “Straining the udder of my heart for its withheld drip, / Behaving licentious toward me, taking no denial, / Depriving me of my best as for a purpose, / Unbuttoning my clothes, holding me by the bare waist, / Deluding my confusion with the calm of the sunlight and pasture-fields—”

PATRICK
You’ve got all that in your head?

MARANNE
And more.

PATRICK *(He can barely talk.)* Tell me.

MARANNE
“Immodestly sliding the fellow-senses away, / They bribed to swap off with touch and go and graze at the edges of me—”

PATRICK
Stop. *(Pause. She’s still touching his decoy. He takes it from her and wipes his brow.)* It’s hot.

MARANNE
There’ll be a storm tonight.

PATRICK
Do you remember that last storm?

MARANNE
Which one?

PATRICK
We’d finished digging for the day, were drinking and playing cards, knew we’d feel it in the morning, and then— *(Beat.)*

MARANNE
And then?

PATRICK
All that rain, coming from out west, over the lake, over the river, God raging on our bodies. *(She puts her hand on him.)*
A promise.

Tell me more.

This is Not the End of “Sexy Decoy”
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes
THE NEXT THING
After Eugene O’Neill’s Before Breakfast

CHARACTERS: JOSEPHINE; 50s.  
ANTHONY; 50s.

AT RISE: JOSEPHINE towel-dries two fragile cups and saucers in an apartment in Brooklyn in the 1950s. ANTHONY is off-stage, shaving in the bathroom, with the door open.

ANTHONY
You having an egg? Then I’ll have an egg.

JOSEPHINE sets down the cups and cracks an egg into a bowl. NOTE: Throughout the play, ANTHONY might hum or even sing, at intervals.

ANTHONY, Continued
I like my eggs, you make a good egg Josephine, you’ve always made a good egg. (Beat.) Anthony always loved your eggs too, used to tell me he loved when you fried your eggs and when you scrambled them, you make a good scrambled egg Josephine, and when you made those frittatas on Sundays. Anthony always loved your eggs. Still loves your eggs, I’m sure, if he’d ever come and visit. Ungrateful son of a bitch.

JOSEPHINE adds salt and/or pepper and/or milk and whisks the egg.

ANTHONY, Continued
Leaving to work for Mr. Garpone. Mr. Garpone! Ow! (ANTHONY has cut himself.) Goddamn son of a bitch, cut myself again. Josephine, get me a napkin?

JOSEPHINE gets a napkin and gives it to ANTHONY, who is still in the bathroom.

ANTHONY, Continued
Thanks.

She crosses back to the egg and continues whisking, by rote.
ANTHONY, Continued
You look good today. You always look good in the morning. Not like when you were twenty but good. (Beat.) So what are you doing today? You going to the dressmaker? Do a little work for her? Or you going to your mother’s? She’ll complain to you about me again you know. “That Anthony,” she’ll say. “That Anthony, he’s the reason your boy left.” What does she know, the fat cow. Can’t even speak English. Got off the boat two years ago and can’t even speak English. She’ll say all that in Italiano. It’s 1953, Brooklyn’s gonna win the pennant, and she’s speaking Italiano complaining about me. Ha! She should be complaining about Mr. Garpone. Mr. Garpone who steals her grandson and ships him out to Commack to pour concrete when he could be here with us. Next thing you know she’ll be baking pignoli cookies for Mr. Garpone and praying novenas.

JOSEPHINE sets the cups into the saucers and pours coffee from a pot into one of the cups, then stands still.

ANTHONY, Continued
Praying her novenas for Mr. Garpone and his silk ties and concrete. Like concrete is so important, not like the Dodgers, not like his Mama and Papa, ungrateful son of a bitch, what’s he doing in Commack?

JOSEPHINE still holds the coffee pot.
She’s trying to make a decision.

ANTHONY, Continued
I noticed Mr. Garpone was here the other day. You didn’t think I noticed, did you. What was he doing here? All dressed in his suit and shoes. Dropping off a letter from Anthony? Kid won’t even buy his own postage? Why didn’t you tell me? Why didn’t you show me the letter? I saw the fancy dishes in the drying rack, the burnt candles, I know what’s going on. And I found the letters in your drawer too Josephine. You don’t think I know about all those letters from Anthony?

JOSEPHINE sets down the pot, opens a drawer, and removes a small pile of letters. She bundles these neatly and places them in her purse.

ANTHONY, Continued
You don’t think I know what he says in all those letters? Next thing you know Mr. Garpone will be teaching Anthony Italian and he’ll be eating Sunday dinner at your mother’s instead of here.

This is Not the End of “The Next Thing”
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes
TWO BODIES IN THE FIELD

CHARACTERS:  

JIM; late 40s.  
ANN; late 40s.

AT RISE:  

JIM and ANN sprawled on a picnic blanket in a field at Highland Park in Rochester. Her head might be resting in his lap.

JIM

Thanks.

ANN

For what?

JIM

For surprising me. (ANN smiles.) And for lunch.

He strokes her hair or something similar, then digs in a bag and pulls out a book. She shifts and watches him.

ANN

What are you reading?

JIM

Just something for work.

ANN

Oh. (Beat. She touches him, then pulls away.) I was here yesterday too.

JIM

Yeah?

ANN

I was driving by and parked on Alpine, saw some people walking their dogs, a family by the playground…

JIM looks at ANN.

JIM

I love you.
I know. *(JIM continues reading.)* The lilacs were spent, I noticed that, how they were all in clusters, all dried-out, like they’d crumble in my hands. The daffodils too, but I expected that. *(JIM reads.)* You remember when the lilacs were in full bloom, last spring? Their smell so heavy, almost too much? I miss that.

The air is clean now, nice.

Yeah. *(JIM puts down his book. ANN notices this.)* I walked to the top of the hill, by the reservoir. I could see the foothills, in the distance, pushing into, I imagined walking there, the air clean, the way you like it, even a bit of a chill.

Yeah?

I hadn’t been here since last spring, I had forgotten…. *(Beat.)* Then I walked past those clumps of dead daffodils.

Lilacs.

Spent. *(Beat.)*

The rhododendrons will be out soon.

*JIM touches* ANN *gently, his fingers lingering. She looks at his fingers.*

I stopped, right there, no more blossoms, just rot and leaves. *(Beat.)* I imagined them in bloom, you know, I wanted them to bloom so badly, I don’t know why. *(Beat. JIM removes his fingers.)* And then— *(Beat.)*

What?

I saw this— *(Beat.)* Shadow, these shadows, moving, right in the field, right over there.

By that tree? *(He gestures.)*
Yeah, kind of hidden in the grass.

Groundhogs?

No, bodies.

Bodies?

Two bodies. I walked closer to see—

Ann—

I know. I should have known better. But I couldn’t help myself.

(He’s angry.) What are you crazy? Why did you do that? Why do you always? You could have—

They were in the tall grass, like wheat, only I knew it wasn’t wheat, but I kept thinking I could pick some and bake bread, I could pull some out of the ground and bake bread and we could eat the bread with our dinner.

I hope you didn’t—

I wanted to see them—

Jesus—

He was on top of her, they had a blanket—

Ann—
ANN
An old blanket, like a quilt, maybe handmade, it was wrapped around them. There was a breeze, kind of warm, and they were moving, and I heard them too. (Beat.)

JIM
You stayed?

ANN
I couldn’t help it.

JIM
I’m going to read.

He picks up his book.

This is Not the End of “Two Bodies in the Field”
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes
THEY WERE REAL

CHARACTERS: MARIA; 20s, a migrant worker.
SAL; 20s, a migrant worker.

AT RISE: MARIA and SAL stand on ladders picking apples in Sodus, New York. Unless otherwise indicated, they are working.

They were real, Maria.

I know.

No, you don’t.

If you say so.

God created them on the sixth day. Adam first and then Eve from Adam’s rib.

You’ve told me.

And then on the seventh day God rested.

Claro que si.

Their names were Adam and Eve and they lived in a beautiful garden, not unlike this garden, but their garden was called Eden. The flowers stretched towards the sun and the trees bent their branches so Adam and Eve never went hungry. They slept on the grass, safe.

Just like this garden. Safe. (Pause.)

I know things could be better.

Yes, they could. (Pause.)
SAL
I know it’s not just the garden. (Pause.) Adam and Eve were tempted too. (They look at each other. There is longing in their look.) The serpent told them about a fruit that would teach them to know good from evil, Eve ate the fruit then gave it to Adam, he ate it too, and they saw their nakedness. God found out, and they got in trouble because their nakedness was evil, they got sent away, out of the garden, and they had to work and still went hungry. (Pause.) We are their descendants, Maria. They were real. (Pause.) Maria, you’ve changed. (Pause.)

MARIA
Father Steve came to the orchard this morning, before you woke up. (Pause.) He asked for you. (Pause.) I told him you must be sleeping still, that you helped your mama late last night, that she had a fever and there was no doctor who would come to help and of course you knew how to speak English, maybe you could call La Casa and get some advice. He called you a good boy. I blushed. I remembered your arms in the orchard last week, your breath on my neck. (SAL is very still.) He told me he would let you sleep and that you could have a double lesson tomorrow. “A double lesson?” I asked. (SAL picks apples slowly, methodically, in time with his breathing.) “I’m teaching him the way of the robe,” he said. I didn’t know what that meant. “The way of the robe?” It sounded like a riddle or something from the old country.

SAL
He’s been teaching me—

MARIA
Yes, he told me. (Pause.)

SAL
So I can teach others. (Silence. They pick apples.) I’m going to be a priest, Maria.

MARIA
Yes.

SAL
I’m going to tell the stories our divine Father put into His scripture. I’m going to spread the Word, Maria.

MARIA
Sal.

SAL
Our people need a priest, Maria. They need to know what’s real in this world. (Pause.)

MARIA
Cortlands are real—

SAL
Maria—
MARIA
Their sweetness, it stays in my mouth and I can feel when my teeth break their skin. And Braeburns are real, with their little bit of tartness that lights firecrackers inside of me like on the Fourth of July. Empires are real with their hard flesh that fits in my hand. And Jonagolds, they also are real, even if they were invented in a lab, they still taste good when your mama slices them. McIntoshes are real with their juice that slides down my chin in the autumn warmth. Adam and Eve are not real.

SAL
Maria….

This is Not the End of “They Were Real”
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes
COLD WAR

CHARACTERS: DANIEL; 20s.
SPIKE; 20s.
ROGER; 20s.

AT RISE: SPIKE wears gloves and fights a hanging punching bag in a gym at West Point Academy. ROGER and DANIEL watch.

He’s coming today?

Yeah.

Who?

What are you gonna do?

I thought I’d take him to Fort Montgomery.

Fort Montgomery?

No, what are you gonna do?

Like I said, I thought I’d take him to Fort Montgomery. (Pause.)

I took my dad there when he came.

Roger.

You’re talking about your dad, right? (Beat.)

Yeah.
ROGER
You should look for Fred.

SPIKE
Fred?

ROGER
Yeah, Fred. (Beat.) He haunts the basement of the visitor center.

DANIEL
That’s crap Roger.

ROGER
What’s up your ass?

DANIEL
Fort Montgomery is a National Historic Landmark.

ROGER
So? It can’t be haunted?

DANIEL
I swear to God.

ROGER
I’m not saying it’s not an important fortress—

DANIEL
Shut up Roger.

ROGER
I’m just saying that when my dad and I were there, the tour guide told us this story about a ghost named Fred, that’s all.

DANIEL
(Standing.) Shut up Roger, have some fucking respect!

ROGER
I don’t have respect? (Beat.) When my dad visited, we toured Fort Montgomery, what’s disrespectful about that? (Pause. DANIEL sits, his back to ROGER.) The guide talked about some battle, about the British launching cannons on us, burning down Fort Montgomery as well as the other one, Clinton I think it was. (Pause. No response.) You don’t care? Now who’s disrespectful? (Pause. No response.) People died, Daniel. (Pause. No response.) Soldiers. (Pause. No response.) You guys suck, I’m getting some water. (ROGER leaves.)
Well?

SPIKE

What was that all about?

DANIEL

What?

SPIKE

You were a little hard on him, don’t you think?

DANIEL

What are you gonna do? (Beat.)

SPIKE

I’m not getting into this.

DANIEL

Spike—

SPIKE

Daniel. I’m not getting into this.

*DANI EL stops punching the bag. He wipes his brow and sits next to DANI EL. Pause.*

DANIEL

Okay.

SPIKE

I’m taking my dad to Fort Montgomery. (Pause.)

DANIEL

And?

SPIKE

And we’ll look at the goddamn Hudson and listen to some guide tell us about bayonets and cannonballs from 230 years past. What else do you want?

DANIEL

Spike.

SPIKE

And British warships charging up the river and American Patriots holding their fucking ground.
You know what—

Yeah, I know, and I’m tired. (Pause.) Why were you so hard on Roger?

I wasn’t hard on him.

You were, you’re always hard.

He’s an ass.

You were pushing him.

So?

Why can’t you leave it alone?

Jesus—

Daniel. (Beat.) Look, I’m tired of fighting.

So am I.

I wanna have pancakes at some diner, make jokes with my dad about Mom and Lisa’s turkey at Thanksgiving, talk about Iraq and Afghanistan—

You said you—

This is Not the End of “Cold War”
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes
DAVID
Lieutenant Colonel Bolton swore he’d seek revenge. “I will haunt you until her honor is restored,” he cried, dashing his knife against the darkened clouds and fierce October winds.

JACK
You’re good at this.

DAVID
The October winds cried back and in their cries Lieutenant Colonel Bolton heard the voice of his wife’s brother. “Then you will haunt me for eternity,” her brother said, driving Lieutenant Colonel Bolton to leap from the deck of The Ontario into the lake, slashing the waves with his knife, until he sank to the cold bottom like a dead stone.

LUCY
This is dumb. Bolton died with the rest of his eighty-eight passengers when The Ontario got hit by a blizzard.

JACK
Shut up Lucy. God, I can’t believe they made us bring her.

DAVID
It’s okay.

JACK
It’s not okay. (Pause.) Whatever.

DAVID
Do you want the prequel?

JACK
Huh?

DAVID
The prequel, what happened before the ship left Fort Niagara.
JACK

Sure.

DAVID

*(DAVID uses a fake scary voice.)* Lieutenant Colonel Bolton’s wife was heavy with child. *(JACK throws something at DAVID. DAVID laughs. LUCY shudders.)* “At last,” Lieutenant Colonel Bolton thought. “At last I’ll have an heir.” He paced their dining-room and listened as his wife writhed in agony. She—what should her name be?

*(Laughs cruelly.)* Lucy.

DAVID

Okay. Lucy moaned as if possessed by the devil, by some creature with a will of its own that harbored in her womb. She moaned and Bolton paced, and the night got darker.

JACK

Yeah yeah, get to the good stuff!

DAVID

Suddenly, Bolton heard a scream. *(DAVID screams, then looks around—they’re in a public park.)* At first, he thought the scream was typical of a woman about to deliver her first child, but he soon realized something terrible had happened.

JACK

Excellent!

DAVID

He dashed up the stairs and down the crooked hallway to the threshold of the bedroom. His wife lay on the bed.

*DAVID pauses for dramatic effect.*

JACK

Yeah?

DAVID

His wife lay on the bed in a pool of blood. And between her legs, where the baby should have been, a deformed creature with no legs and a head the size of a watermelon howled to the moon, slipping in its own juice, flailing its bent arms through the nightmare of its birth. Bolton’s wife couldn’t take her eyes off the creature. She stared and screamed until she fainted in his arms. Bolton had the midwife remove the creature at once and, when his wife recovered, he cradled her gently. “Lucy,” he whispered. “Lucy….”

LUCY

Please don’t use my name.
JACK gives her a look. He moves closer to her. She stiffens.

DAVID
Bolton didn’t know what to do. “What could this mean?” he thought to himself. “How could this creature come from her womb?”

JACK
She did it with a werewolf!

JACK makes a scary sound, pretending to attack LUCY. She stands and moves away. DAVID laughs.

DAVID
Curious, Bolton rested his exhausted wife on the bed.

JACK watches LUCY.

JACK
In all that blood?

DAVID
Good point. Bolton lifted his wife’s exhausted body and carried her to the parlor where he rested her on the divan.

JACK still watches LUCY.

JACK
Nice word.

DAVID
Thanks. He rested her on the divan and went back to the bedroom to see if he could solve the mystery. He looked in his wife’s drawers, underneath the mattress, but found nothing.

LUCY sits on the other side of the stage.

JACK
He should look in her jewelry box.

LUCY
Shut up Jack.

DAVID
He looked in her jewelry box, and at the bottom someone had hidden a small pile of letters in a handwriting he didn’t recognize. He removed the letters and sat on the bed.
JACK

Gross.

DAVID
Okay. He sat in a chair that faced the window and began to read. “To my dear Lucy....”

JACK
I knew it! She did it with someone else! The whore!

*JACK moves towards LUCY again.*

DAVID
“I still feel the curve of your breast beneath my fingers.”

Finally....

DAVID
“And can taste your insides in my mouth.” (*JACK is sitting next to LUCY.*) “Please forgive me, everything I did was out of love.” Signed, “Roderick.”

JACK
Who’s Roderick? (*Beat.*) The plumber?

DAVID
They didn’t have plumbers in 1780 idiot.

JACK
Uh, the pizza guy?

DAVID
Idiot.

JACK
A werewolf! I knew it! (*Pause.*)

DAVID
Her brother. Roderick was Lucy’s brother.

*Silence. Both JACK and LUCY are completely still.*

DAVID, *Continued*
She had conceived before and had taken herbs, but herbs didn’t work this time.
DAVID notices his “audience” is affected by his story. He becomes more impassioned.

DAVID, Continued
Bolton knew he could never restore her honor. Her brother had violated her body and he could never undo that violation.

Beat. DAVID whispers. He’s a master storyteller, after all.

This is Not the End of “Home”
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes
RELATIVITY

CHARACTERS:  
CHASTITY: 18, African-American  
BRAD; 19, white.

AT RISE:  
CHASTITY and BRAD sit on an old sofa  
at a prestigious university in western New York and drink keg beer in plastic cups.

CHASTITY  
So what brought you here?

BRAD  
Business Methods. (CHASTITY laughs.) My high-school Business Methods teacher always talked about this school, how it’s so visionary and global. He taught us to go after things, I thought it would be cool and progressive to go to his school.

CHASTITY  
His school?

BRAD  
Well, he went here.

CHASTITY  
Oh.

BRAD  
Actually….

CHASTITY  
Yeah?

BRAD  
Never mind. (Beat.) What about you?

CHASTITY  
What?

BRAD  
What brought you here?

CHASTITY  
I grew up here.
No way!

Yeah, just on the other side of the river, my bus would go over the Elmwood Street Bridge and I’d see the chapel and the observatory and I’d, you know.

That’s—

Yeah.

You’re— (Beat.)

They drink, awkward.

I always wanted to meet a girl like you.

What do you mean, “like me”?

Nothing, there just aren’t many girls like you where I’m from.

Oh.

My dad would— (Beat.)

What?

Nothing. So. Tell me about Rochester.

Tell me about your dad.
BRAD
It’s just that, he went here too. (Beat.) He’s really smart.

CHASTITY
So are you, you wouldn’t be here if you weren’t.

Sure.

It’s true.

BRAD
I get good grades.

CHASTITY
Exactly.

BRAD
That’s not because I’m smart though. (Beat.) My dad... (Beat.) He helped me figure out some things.

CHASTITY
Like what?

BRAD
Like how to get good grades without being smart.

What does that mean?

CHASTITY
Tell me about Rochester. (Beat.)

BRAD
What do you want to know?

I don’t know, tell me about your family.

CHASTITY
My dad drinks and my mom is a fat bitch, how’s that?

Wow.
CHASTITY
(She laughs.) Yeah. (Pause.) But the older couple who lives next door to me…. They’re like ninety years old and they used to invite me into their parlor on Saturdays when I was in high school, it has this rickety piano and the guy would play and she would sing, and they’d go over my school reports with me and help me with math, and then they’d tell me all these stories about how they used to travel all over the country, marching for civil rights. When Obama was elected, they rode a bus to DC—they didn’t think they’d see that, not in their lifetime.

Cool.

CHASTITY
Yeah. I think a lot about that, civil rights. You know, my grammar school had this “Frederick Douglass” club.

BRAD
Frederick Douglass?

CHASTITY
Yeah, he’s a big deal around here, he’s buried right in Mount Hope Cemetery. And the club, once we went to Philadelphia for a contest, I still remember part of the speech I performed, it was for the Fourth of July. I don’t remember the beginning, but later it goes, “The sunlight that brought light and healing to you, has brought stripes and death to me.”

That’s intense.

BRAD
There are definitely no girls like you back home.

CHASTITY
You keep saying that.

BRAD
It’s true.

Pause. Awkward.
CHASTITY
Did you take physics in high school? (Beat.) I did, we learned about relativity, you know, that time isn’t this universal constant but changes depending on a sequence of external variables? I know this isn’t a great leap or discovery or anything, but I thought right away how relativity applies to real life too, how nothing is really constant or universal, but everything depends on all these variables. Like some people might think that because my father drinks he’s a bad father, but he doesn’t hit me and he asks me questions about my life. And my mother, she goes to Church three days a week but she’s always saying that white folks are evil and girls are skanky, that I should be ashamed, and that I’m dumb.

BRAD
She’d hate me.

CHASTITY
She would.

BRAD
(BRAD puts his arm around CHASTITY.) I don’t think you’re skanky.

CHASTITY
(She removes his arm.) You keep talking about “girls like me.” But that’s relative too. There’s no such thing as “girls like me.” There’s just me. When you say “girls like me,” you’re talking more about your own variables than anything about me, anything constant or real about me.

BRAD
Okay.

CHASTITY
You know, when I left Frederick Douglass’ grave, I walked up the hill to Susan B. Anthony’s grave. (Pause.) She’s pretty famous too, she was this pioneer for women’s suffrage. I walked to her grave that same day. There wasn’t all the same fanfare there, just one little sticker, “I Voted Today,” but that’s when I cried. That one little sticker. You see, it’s all relative. Women voted in this country since 1920, you’d think that would be old news, but that’s what got me. And she was a white woman too, not “like me,” but I understood that, that impulse, I understood why that stranger put that sticker there. For whatever reason, I understood.

BRAD puts his arm around CHASTITY again.

This is Not the End of “Relativity”
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes
LITTER

CHARACTERS:  JOSH; 40s.
SYLVIA; 30s, Josh’s wife.
JASMINE; 40s.
TOM; 40s, Jasmine’s husband.

AT RISE:  The eighteenth hole at a public golf
course in New Paltz, New York. JOSH
putts. He misses.

JOSH

Damn.

SYLVIA

My god, let it go.

JOSH quickly putts into the hole, picks up
his ball, shoots SYLVIA a look, and puts
his putter back in his bag.

JASMINE

It’s your turn, Sylvie. (SYLVIA stands still.) Sylvie and I played Monday. We needed to get
out, right Sylvie? You know how it is, all stuffed up in town. College folks on one hand,
hippies on the other, and those rednecks breeding their litters. (Beat.) Sylvie.

SYLVIA watches JOSH as she walks
towards her ball. She does some
awkward measuring with her stick,
bending down, eyeballing the cup, etc.,
during the following lines.

JASMINE, Continued

They come from the city, hop on the train or take their hybrids, before you know it we’ve got
tofu on all our menus. And those dirty kids with their snot noses, feeding off our taxpayer
dollars, damn welfare state. Thank god we didn’t have any Tom, right?

TOM

What’s that?

JASMINE gives SYLVIA a conspiratorial
look.

JASMINE

Thank god we didn’t have any children, Tom, any dirty litters sucking the milk out of the
state, not to mention my breasts.
JASMINE holds her breasts.

TOM
Our children wouldn’t suck anything from the state, Jasmine. We pay into the system. We do not filch out of the system.

JASMINE
We should bomb the trains, keep those New Yorkers out of here, with their socialist ideas. Sylvie, come on, honey. (SYLVIA puts into the cup. She picks up her ball and puts her club in her bag.) And it’s not just the New Yorkers, you know, it’s us too, feeding into the university with its theoretical mishmash. No one looks at the mountains. People make abstract sculptures that “challenge the material construction of the mountains,” but they don’t look at the mountains. What are you doing, Sylvie?

SYLVIA is still putting her club in the bag. Beat. Awkward.

TOM
At least the college takes care of its own, not like those runts in the gutter.

JOSH
But the college doesn’t pay taxes, don’t forget.

SYLVIA
How could we forget?

JOSH
(A warning.) Sylvia.

JASMINE
They need to look at the mountains, or stand in the river— (She puts her hand on SYLVIA’s arm.) Then they’ll stop theorizing the “semiotics of cartography” and get their fucking feet wet. (She laughs. To TOM.) How do they get out of it?

JOSH
Non-profit.

JASMINE
(Amused.) Bullshit. What do you know about non-profit.

TOM
(Teasing.) Quite a bit more than you know about postmodern art.
JASMINE
We should bomb the college, bomb the train station, bomb the vegetarian soup shack on Main with its tofu-inspired vegetarian beef stew— (JOSH laughs.) And put little bombs in all the dollar bills we give to vagrants so they either explode or starve to death.

TOM
Don’t forget, Jasmine, we have a thing tomorrow at the Weil, a fundraiser. No bombs please.

JASMINE
I’ll behave, I always do. (JOSH laughs again. SYLVIA stares at him. JOSH stops laughing, Awkward.) Sylvie? (SYLVIA, near tears, turns away. JASMINE watches her.) Go ahead, Tom, it’s your turn. (TOM moves to his ball, quickly puts into the hole, retrieves his ball, places his club into his bag.) Wow. I guess it’s my turn. (She walks to her ball, stands still.) Boys, why don’t you get us some martinis, let’s get warmed up before we hit the clubhouse.

TOM
I don’t know if that’s a good idea, Jasmine.

JASMINE
Tom.

Beat. An understanding.

TOM
Josh?

JOSH
Why not?

TOM and JOSH pick up their bags and exit. Pause.

SYLVIA
I don’t want to talk about it.

JASMINE
Well that’s too bad. Jesus Sylvia. You and Joshua—

This isn’t about Josh!

SYLVIA
This damn well is about Joshua. You can’t keep this up and expect the four of us to spend time together, not in public—
SYLVIA

Maybe—

JASMINE

—you can’t. (Beat. More gently.) It’s me, for chrissake, Sylvie, tell me.

SYLVIA

(Pause.) You already know. (Pause.)

JASMINE

Sylvie….

SYLVIA

Please stop.

JASMINE

Fine, have it your way. I’ll sink this putt, you know I will, and I’ll walk into that clubhouse and there will be nothing.

SYLVIA

That’s not fair. (JASMINE prepares to putt.) Please. (JASMINE relaxes.) Thank you.

SYLVIA takes time to sit on the green.

JASMINE

Sylvia….

SYLVIA

On Monday, after we played, I had a drink at the clubhouse…. (SYLVIA takes off one of her shoes. JASMINE watches her.) A martini. I thought about the day I met you three, you and Tom and—and we were here, do you remember? They were at the bar and you bought me a drink, and I told you I never lived by mountains before, and you laughed and asked me if I thought Joshua was—and you whispered to me that you….

JASMINE

(She whispers.) That I hate men. (She laughs and leans against her putter.) I still won’t let poor Tom touch me.

Pause. SYLVIA takes off her other shoe.

SYLVIA

After you left, that first day, I looked at the mountains, those mountains right over there, and I wondered what it means to be so cold, and I walked through that small bunch of pines behind the ninth hole, by myself, I don’t know if you’ve ever noticed them.
JASMINE

Oh Sylvie….

SYLVIA

I took off my shoes and rolled up my pants—and I stood in the river, you know, the Wallkill, right there—(She cries softly.) Right behind the ninth hole, the water cold and I could hear people laughing, but they couldn’t see me, no one could see me because of the trees, because of the….

JASMINE

(Pause. This next speech is gentle.) You listen to me, Sylvia—

SYLVIA

Jas….

JASMINE

You might think you don’t want Josh anymore—

SYLVIA

I never—

JASMINE

You might think you’re stuck and fantasize about some free-as-the-wind, something, but it’s not pretty out there, and you have no money of your own, and Josh is a lawyer.

SYLVIA

I can’t—

JASMINE

Sylvia! (Beat.) I won’t let Tom touch me. (Beat.) But I talk to him, at least in public. (Beat.) I talk to him about taxes and the mountains and paintings at the Weil, and even if none of it’s real—(Pause. SYLVIA turns away.) Sylvie….(Beat.) Put your shoes on Sylvia. (SYLVIA starts putting her shoes back on.) You’ve got to take better care of yourself.

SYLVIA

I know. (She finishes putting her shoes back on, stands, and faces JASMINE. Pause.) You know what I want.

This is Not the End of “Litter”
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes
BACKWARDS

CHARACTERS: D ARCY; 30s, female, almost like a
cartoon character.
OLIVIA; 40s.

AT RISE: OLIVIA poses by Lake Chautauqua, and
D ARCY paints.

D ARCY
When I was in school, I used to talk like that too. (D ARCY hums while shifting some aspect of
OLIVIA’s pose, then begins painting again.) I used to use all those big words too, full of air,
you’re all so full of air.

OLIVIA

D ARCY
(Sing-songy.) Uh—keep your mouth shut! (She paints.) Now I don’t worry about being full of
air, now I have a job, now I use technology.

OLIVIA

But—

D ARCY
I don’t know why you can’t keep your mouth shut. (Silence. D ARCY paints.) I’ve come here
for as long as I can remember, at least five years, I used to love going to the lectures, listening
to some scholar blah-blah about the meaning of life, ha! (Silence. D ARCY paints.) You think
you know so much, go to all those lectures, life-long learning, blah-blah-blah.

OLIVIA

Those—

D ARCY
Don’t move! (Beat.) Lectures about dead people—

OLIVIA

Why—

D ARCY
Dead ideas, ha!

OLIVIA

But—
DARCY
Your skin is lovely. Have you been to the lake this morning?

Pauses. Darcy paints.

OLIVIA
Why do you come? You said you come every year, you told me that—

DARCY
Don’t move! (Beat.) While you were at the morning lecture I walked to the lake and watched the birds.

OLIVIA
That’s hardly—

DARCY
Blah-blah about the birds. (Beat. She’s confused.) There was a big one, skinny legs….

OLIVIA
A great blue heron?

DARCY
Standing just about where you are, almost to my chest. (Beat.) Why don’t they talk about something practical. I just want something concrete, you know, defined, something I can use in my job.

OLIVIA
I think you’re missing—

DARCY
So I approached her—

OLIVIA
Who?

DARCY
The bird, I was quiet, that thing on her head— (Beat.)

OLIVIA
Her crest.

DARCY
All, in the sunlight, like your skin. (Silence. She paints.) Five years, nothing practical, nothing good for me, nothing I can measure! (Beat.) That’s why I’ve stopped going to the lectures.
OLIVIA

Why do you come then? (*Silence.*)

DARCY

I didn’t— (*Beat.*)

OLIVIA

What? (*Beat.*)

DARCY

I didn’t want to scare her. (*Beat.*)

OLIVIA

The heron?

DARCY

Certainly not to hurt her. Stop moving! (*She paints.*) I walked slowly, I wanted— (*Beat.*)

OLIVIA

Sure.

DARCY

Then I turned around, I approached her *backwards.*

OLIVIA

Backwards?

DARCY

I thought that might help.

OLIVIA

Did it?

*This is Not the End of “Backwards”*

*Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes*
GAY MARRIAGE

CHARACTERS:  
MICHAEL; teenager.  
STEVE; teenager.  
BARB; 40s.  
STELLA; 40s.  

AT RISE:  
MICHAEL and STEVE sit on a wagon at Ocean Beach waiting for the ferry to arrive.

MICHAEL  
Any minute now.

STEVE  
Another twenty bucks.

MICHAEL  
I can feel the money in my hands! (They high-five each other or some kind of handshake.) So, who is it?

STEVE  
Some lady.

MICHAEL  
Yeah?

STEVE  
Stella.

MICHAEL  
Did she sound hot?

STEVE  
You ass.

MICHAEL  
Well? (Beat.)

STEVE  
Yeah. (They high-five each other or some kind of handshake.) But don’t get your hopes up.

MICHAEL  
What, she won’t want this? (He indicates his own body, then stands.) There’s the ferry, I can see it!
STEVE

Twenty bucks, all for papa.

MICHAEL

That’s two beers each.

STEVE

Sure, at Housers, or a couple of six-packs and we could hang behind the dunes.

MICHAEL

Excellent. (Beat.) And Stella could join us.

STEVE

Yeah, with her new husband, who will beat your ass.

MICHAEL

Are you serious?

STEVE

She’s honeymooning. (MICHAEL sits back down in the wagon.) Yep, that’s what she said, coming to the beach for her honeymoon.

MICHAEL

(He lies down in the wagon.) I think we can use this information.

How?

STEVE

We schmooze them, play them off each other, we can get bigger tips! (The ferry bleats its horn.) Who needs Stella when we’ll have more money! (STEVE picks up a simple, handmade sign that says “Stella.”) I’m imagining a big tall sand dune, you and me getting loaded with three six-packs, the moon full in the night sky, some deer munching the ocean grass, and then….

STEVE

Yeah?

MICHAEL

Kim…. She’ll walk by in her hot heels, stumble a little, I’ll push her on the swing, we’ll talk about our childhoods, retire to the dunes, sip some Amstel Light, and the full moon will do its dirty work....

STEVE

Even better....
MICHAEL

Yeah?

STEVE

Stella will walk by, crying because her new husband ignored her at dinner, and you and I will console her, take her to the sand dune…

They high-five each other or some kind of handshake. BARB walks up to them carrying two heavy suitcases.

BARB

You must be Steve. Thanks so much for meeting us here. This is great!

No problem, ma’am, we’re glad to help.

He shoots MICHAEL a look. BARB laughs.

Aren’t you polite!

We aim to please.

STEVE takes one suitcase, MICHAEL takes the other, and they load them onto the wagon.

MICHAEL

How was the ride over?

BARB

Smooth, the salt air felt so good, and the water, that gray, I couldn’t stop looking at it.

STEVE

Wait ‘til you see the ocean.

BARB

I know.

STELLA walks over with two heavy suitcases.
STELLA

Steve!

STEVE

Huh?

STELLA

Are you Steve?

STEVE

Yeah. Who are you?

STELLA

I’m Stella, we spoke over the phone, I’m honeymooning.

STEVE

Oh, I’m sorry, there must have been a misunderstanding, I thought— (STEVE turns to BARB.) There must be two Steves working today, and I’ve already promised to help this young woman and her new husband. (BARB laughs. STEVE gets an idea.) I don’t want to take someone else’s job, ma’am, but if you can’t find your guy, Michael and I will be happy to help you too.

This is Not the End of “Gay Marriage”
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes
PLAY WITHOUT A PROMPT

CHARACTERS: LOUDSPEAKER; a voice.
PERSON; a traveler.
BUSKER; a busker.
PASSENGERS; a various group.

AT RISE: Penn Station, bathed in green light.

LOUDSPEAKER

A PERSON enters carrying a suitcase. He/she sits on a bench, puts down the suitcase, looks around, and exits—leaving the suitcase behind. Green lights intensify to blue.

LOUDSPEAKER, Continued

A BUSKER enters, sets up a collection box, and starts playing. Blue lights intensify to yellow.

LOUDSPEAKER, Continued

This is Not the End of “Play Without a Prompt”
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes

CONTINUE TO NEXT PAGE FOR PROPERTY LIST
PROPERTY LIST

This property list is only a suggestion. It’s possible for a production team to substitute or even mime.

Will They Know Who We Are?
- Various-sized steel boxes

The Door
- Packing boxes
- Packing tape
- Newspaper
- Tools

Speaking Through a Screen
- Chair
- Blanket
- Window
- Electric gardening tool
- Pile of large stones

Ninety Degrees
- Backpack
- Walking stick
- 2 apples
- Water bottle
- Whiskey flask

Page Twenty-Seven
- 2 backpacks
- Walking stick
- Handmade splint
- Guide book
- Jacket
- Flashlight
- Bag of carrots

Goodbye
- Chair

Part of Your Body
- Bench
- Newspaper

Little Hands
- Table
- 3 chairs
- 3 wine glasses with wine

War/Bathtub
- Bathtub
- Towel

As Little Conscious Thought as Possible
- Nothing
Kink
  - Railing
  - Camera phone

Voyeurism
  - Table
  - 2 chairs
  - 2 whiskey glasses with whiskey

Steal
  - Table
  - Chair
  - Old typewriter with paper
  - 2 cigarettes

Rip Van Winkle
  - Table
  - Coffee mug
  - Pipe
  - Pipe tobacco
  - Bar with stools
  - 2 beer mugs with beer
  - Cell-phone

It Gets You
  - Farming tools
  - Table
  - Baskets of green onions, tomatoes, purple potatoes, zucchini
  - Cell-phone

Putting Off
  - Bed with blankets
  - Window

Sexy Decoy
  - Hardcover edition of Leaves of Grass
  - Fishing pole
  - Wooden fish-shaped lure

The Next Thing
  - Table
  - Porcelain coffee pot
  - 2 porcelain coffee cups and saucers
  - Mixing bowl
  - Carton of eggs
  - Salt, pepper, and/or milk
  - Whisk
  - Wad of cash tied with a string
  - Pile of letters
  - Purse

Two Bodies in a Field
  - Picnic blanket
  - Picnic basket with food
- Book

*They Were Real*
  - 2 ladders
  - Apples
  - 2 buckets

*Cold War*
  - Punching bag
  - Bottle of water

*Home*
  - Campfire

*Relativity*
  - Sofa
  - 2 plastic cups filled with beer
  - Pills

*Litter*
  - 4 golf bags with putters and golf balls
  - 4 martini glasses with martinis
  - Socks and shoes

*Backwards*
  - Easel with paints

*Gay Marriage*
  - Wagon
  - Luggage
  - Sign

*Play Without a Prompt*
  - Various musical instruments, busker-style
ADDENDUM

The original production featured seventeen of the plays with one intermission. The following text, performed by “Citizen,” was inserted between plays to create a thru-line.

Where to start? Mountains and lakes, or oceans and islands? Let us turn ourselves, let us rotate to the east…. Because, in the end, it depends on the beginning. And the island was always small….

Not our past but our future, not our mothers or fathers but our children, the racks upon which we hang our flesh…. But sometimes…. Even when our children move inside our wombs, sometimes it’s still too still….

We need our own days to mark, our own days to honor, the last stop busters, the last stop before we dig up our own bones….

Yes! Of course, this is how we decide who we are! Our politics, our ideologies! We’ve measured and we’ve marked, the people will get off their trains, they’ll stop and stare, because we know who we are! Because we want to live…. 

And scientists will come in the future and figure us out! Twenty-nine degrees to the east of the geographic north! Twenty-nine degrees to the east of love…. They’ll say, “We could learn to love.” They’ll say, “We could learn to eat the bread....”

But they won’t know what it means, the raison d’etre, they’ll look at their graphs and electronic texts, but they won’t know what it means. The young ones with their fancy hats will stand on blocks of steel, and we will look at them, and that’s when we will cry....

Maybe they’ll take off their hats and bake apple pies and pull the levers in old voting booths, but will they know who we are? Maybe they’ll scratch their heads and…. Our ocean and lakes, our mountains and islands, so much living, and they will never know who we are....